

After Hours

by BookishTea

Category: South Park

Genre: Drama, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eric Cartman, Kyle B., OC

Pairings: Eric Cartman/Kyle B.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-07 17:48:31

Updated: 2016-04-12 05:26:54

Packaged: 2016-04-27 22:21:24

Rating: M

Chapters: 12

Words: 22,453

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: With an upcoming high school reunion, Kyle Broflovski will remember why he abandoned some relationships. And will have him questioning why he never pursued others.

## 1. Introducing The Creature

\*\*Author's Note: Hello! Claire here. The story "After Hours" is an older work of fiction on my AO3 account, so despite the fact that it is indeed complete, it will take sometime to transfer every chapter to this site. A reason for this is since After Hours has been originally completed, I've improved in my writing abilities, so I shall take the time to go over each chapter and make adjustments where I see fit. \*\*

\*\*Thank you for the understanding.\*\*

\*\*-BookishTea (Claire)\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em>"Time changes everything except something within us which is always surprised by change." - Thomas Hardy<em>

\* \* \*

><p>Kyle Broflovski liked to consider himself a creature of habit, someone who preferred order to chaos. So naturally, Kyle fell into his father's footsteps and pursued a career in law. The years at university were long and hard, but he always enjoyed a challenge. And following this life, he soon found himself in Denver. Gone were his childhood adventures in snowy fields, instead crumpled coffee cups and spreadsheets took its place.<p>

Kyle sighed as he leaned back, a wary hand running through his hair.

He tried to ignore the way his hand was caught in the curls, a jungle of untameable red. Some things appear to never change, even with time. Speaking of which...

A sudden ping from Kyle's pocket had him pulling out his sleek phone, humming under his breath, he wasn't surprised to see another message from his mother.

\*\*I'm so excited to see you, bubbly! xox\*\*

He contemplated ignoring it, perhaps answering it when he got home after work. But that would be pointless, she'd just worry even more.

Before he had the chance to respond, his phone pinged with another message.

\*\*And don't forget to pack a couple of sweaters! It's a bit chilly this time of year. xox\*\*

Kyle rolled his eyes, but still smiled fondly at his mother's antics. She meant well.

\*\*Don't worry, I will. Thanks, Mum.\*\*

Not wanting to spend the rest of his day having a long winded conversation with his mother, quickly Kyle turned off his phone. Only feeling a tad bit guilty for doing so, but everyone needs space. Even more so if you had to deal with his crazy mother. Familiar image of her behind his eyelids, immediately Kyle was reminded of the lack of sleep he got last night. Which wasn't very much different from this week, or year.

Blindly Kyle groped for the styrofoam by his side, first feeling the heat than anything else. Drawing the cup close, he shuddered at the presence of coffee lovingly undertoned by hazelnuts. This is what got him up in the morning, something that he was only slightly ashamed to admit. It made him sound pathetic, saying that.

He took a swig from the cup, embracing the burn as it slid down his throat. It wasn't his fault, none of this was. He was doing so well, finally he had escaped the claws of South Park and its crazy citizens. Here at Colorado's capital he had established himself at a prestigious law firm, with a considerable pay to support him. The work might be a bit tedious at times, but it was his.

Life was good in that respect, thankfully he wasn't eating week old pizza from dumpsters. The only issue he had, a small thing really, was his love life. Kyle didn't think he was needy or anything, so he didn't understand why he had no one to split the rent with, or share his bed. Instead he had the occasional one-night stands, usually with guys from the local bar who looked impressive under dimmed lighting and a haze of alcohol. In the morning however, Kyle was left with a gritty mouth and the unmistakable sense of disappointment. Those were the good nights, the ones where he actually got to sleep.

Last night was the complete opposite, one of the worst he's had in a while, something he blames partly on that date. The possibility of seeing him again, and the chance he'd change his mind was constant. He hated it, feeling so used and unsatisfied. Fuck, he wasn't a child

anymore.

But that's what he felt like, a stupid puppy yearning for affection from an oblivious owner. And he despised it, what it had done to him and what it was continuing to do. Kyle was caught between punching Stan in that attractive face of his, or kissing the moron until these fantasies were gone. In two days time he would face the object of his pining, and he would realize these emotions were fake. Or that's what he wanted.

Kyle Broflovski was a creature of habit, and nobody was going to affect that. Not even Stan Marsh.

\* \* \*

><p>"Are you always this stupid?"<p>

"N-no, sir."

"Are you sure? 'Cause you're really busting my balls here, Haley."

"I'm sor-ry, sir. That was never my intentions." Cartman waved off his assistant's apologizing, not really that pissed off with her. But tension was building with the reunion's upcoming date, and Cartman couldn't resist picking on Haley's naivety. It was her own fault for being so sensitive, idiot.

"Then you should have gotten it right the first time. Now go get it fixed."

"Yes! Right away!" And with that the petite woman was scampering away, reminding Cartman of a particular blonde from his youth. Both were so easy to rile up.

Eyeing the dishes of Chinese food by his papers, Cartman sighed. She forgot to take them with her. Again.

"Haley!" he screamed, the harshness of his voice vibrating within the glass room. It lingered for a moment, echoing until Haley's shimmering locks peered back into the room.

"Y-yes?"

Cartman didn't say anything, and instead rose a brow as he nodded to his desk. Once again questioning his assistant's intelligence, and whether he should just get a new one.

"I am s-so sorry sir, I totally f-"

"Haley, just fucking take it."

She blinked for a moment, that blank look appearing once again. Alright, now she was starting to get under his skin. Taking deep calming breaths, Cartman fought back the desire to throw his stapler at her face. Time had done him well, and with it he gained control over his impatience and anger. But like always, Haley seemed to push Cartman's buttons.

Deciding to tread lightly, Haley stepped into the room. Like she was

facing an angry bear, she kept eye contact as she slowly approached the desk and gingerly picked up the plastic containers.

"Will that be everything, Mr. Cartman?"

"If your head is removed from your ass, then yes. And bring me my dinner. The right order this time."

She didn't need anymore confirmation after that, thankful to make her escape without any injuries this time.

"Dumbass." Cartman muttered under his breath, musing over what he called a life. He gave a jolt in surprise at the sudden vibration in his pocket, causing him to quake like a bowl of jello.

Probably those idiots in the east branch, Cartman thought with a sigh, digging his phone out.

2 new messages from: The Poor Kid

Blinking in surprise, Cartman thumbed through his inbox. Disregarding all of the business related messages in there, and going straight to his childhood friend's.

\*\*Heyyy, dude. are u exciteed for this reunion? Im so am!  
\*\*

\*\*Totally going to be ur wingman, get u all of the hoot guys.  
\*\*

Cartman gave a loud snort in amusement, the text was practically radiating alcohol. Chewing his bottom lip, Cartman quickly shot off a response.

\*\*How drunk are you, Kenny? \*\*

\*\*Message me when you can communicate like an actual human being, I'm working. \*\*

With that Cartman tossed his phone to the opposite side of his desk, not wanting Kenny to be another distraction to his work. Even if he was right, which was a miracle all together.

His phone vibrated again, shaking the papers underneath it with a mini earthquake. Cartman rolled his eyes, picking his pen up in an attempt to focus on numbers that needed to be crunched. It was hard being the CEO of half a dozen small companies, and a rather large time traveling enterprise.

Another vibration. Oh screw it, who was he kidding. Filled with curiosity, Cartman quickly snatched up his cell.

\*\*I forgot u were some bigg businessman, am i bothering u? But seriously, were going 2 get u laidd...Ok, maybe im a little buzzed.  
\*\*

Cartman chuckled lightly, glad to see that Kenny was always the same poor kid. Race car driving didn't change him, which he couldn't say for the other two.

He grimaced with the thought, old faces and memories stabbing his chest like prickly sheets of glass.

\*\*Well, I am.\*\* Cartman paused, wondering if he'd regret this later. Probably. Still, his fingers flew across the keyboard.

\*\*If you think you're up to see me getting sucked, then I'm all yours, poor boy. Try not to vomit yourself to death until we meet up.\*\*

Haley popped in, a little unnerved to see her boss in such a good mood. Usually that was reserved for when his empire increased in size, or some natural disaster happened.

"Sir, I have your food. The correct order this time." Haley mumbled, lifting to show Cartman the white bulky bags.

The scent of chow mein and rice wafting from the bags, it had both of their mouth's watering. Cartman waved her in, eyes not lifting from his phone's screen.

"Grab two plates, Haley."

"Sir?"

With a smirk, he peered upwards. "Do you want some or not?"

"Uh, yes sir! I-I'll go get some right now."

The vibration in his hand pulled him away from the sight of Haley's frantic movements, a grin at his lips.

\*\*Then South Park better look out, 2 sexy guys are on their way. Im making no promises, i plan on getting shitfaced this whole week. Fuckk, we should meet up!\*\*

Clicking his tongue in fondness, Cartman lazily responded back.

\*\*The first round will be on me, but only if you'll help me with a little prank.\*\*

## 2. A Persistently Remembered Dream

\_ "The night is the hardest time to be alive and 4am knows all my secrets." - Poppy Z. Brite\_

\* \* \*

><p>This is what he expected after a tiring day, the fruitless attempt of things. Laying in bed and pondering life, and the reason why he couldn't fall asleep like everyone else. His eyeballs felt burnt, crying for quiet rest. But it was useless, sleep was nowhere to be found.</p>

Past mistakes and conflict swirled inside his head, pounding like a weathered drum. The residing echo was a migraine, well equipt to torment him.

And at the forefront was Stan's face, timid but compassionate.

They've known each other since the beginning, and shared every success and failure. Kyle always hoped that he'd continue this path with Stan by his side, but more as a partner than a friend.

Fate was cruel in that sense, merely giving him a taste. Kyle groaned, digging his head into his lumpy pillows. On their own accord, his fingers twitched uncontrollably. He was unaware of the spasm.

\_The wind howled out in the distant, sounding like it was behind an invisible wall. It was warm that day, with a light dusting of snow underneath their feet. This was the perfect time and day to ask, Kyle was sure of it. But that didn't make it any easier, in fact Kyle was plain terrified. It was only the two of them at the bus-stop, so it should have been easy to ask. And yet he hasn't, not yet.\_

\_ "S-Stan?" he started, voice briefly cracking in anxiety.\_

\_ Stan glanced over, eyes half-lidded with the urge to sleep. "Yeah, what's up?" \_

\_ This was it, his big chance. He felt slimy, invisible worms inching along goosebump riddled skin. "I've been meaning to, uh, ask you something..." \_

\_ "Hm?" \_

\_ Kyle shook his head to himself, assaulted with a new-found emotion. It was both brilliant and terrifying. God, Stan was attractive.\_

\_ His friend's silky black hair was tousled from his warm bed, yet appeared effortlessly fashionable. Something he could never achieve, not with his rat's nest. Come on, Broflovski. You can do this.\_

\_ He nibbled on the inside of his cheek, teeth grazing the soft flesh of his mouth. "Do you want to go on a date?" \_

\_ "What?" \_

\_ Shit, he's looking now. Really looking.\_

\_ He appeared to be mulling over the words, head tilting with the question. It made Kyle love him even more.\_

\_ "What, like a play date? Don't you think we're getting too old for that? We're in high school now." \_

\_ "Yeah." Kyle caught himself saying, trying to pass the whole thing off as a simple play date.\_

\_ No, you have to know his answer or it'll haunt you for the rest of your life.\_

\_ "N-no, not a play date." \_

\_ "Alright...what do you mean?"\_

\_ Kyle sighed, Stan could really be heedless sometimes. Mustering all of the courage he held, Kyle stared off into the distance. A breeze of ice particles danced on the field's surface, sparkling like diamonds.\_

\_ Loudly Kyle sniffed, his nose felt heavy and damp.\_

\_ "I want to date you, Stan. Romantically."\_

\_ Nothing. There was an abyss between them, and Kyle wanted to sink inside. The minutes that passed by shook Kyle to his core, curdling his stomach. He was tempted to speak out, to fill this empty space. But he couldn't, Stan had to be the first one.\_

\_ "I don't know what to say..."\_

\_ Just say yes.\_

\_ "I-I'm sorry, dude." No. "I just, don't feel the same way..."\_

\_ Kyle looked away from the field, glancing at Stan's expression. There was no ridicule there, no contempt. He just felt...sorry, silently wishing he didn't have to hurt his friend.\_

\_ It would have been easier if there was some, so Kyle could block out the heartbreak with anger. He blinked as a wave assaulted him, causing his eyes to water up.\_

\_ Fuck, he wasn't going to cry. Not in front of him.\_

\_ "Look at these losers, showing up early like a bunch of tools."\_

\_ Using the distraction of Kenny and Cartman's arrival, Kyle discretely wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, getting rid of the evidence.\_

\_ "I'd rather be early than late, fatass." Kyle greeted, adding a laugh to the end of the comment. It sounded fake to his ears, almost hollow. Stan must have felt the same way, as he furrowed his brow, looking away.\_

\_ "Shut the fuck up, Jew! I'm big-boned!"\_

\_ This is what he needed, Cartman's loud and obnoxious voice to fill in the void.\_

\_ "That's what you think!"\_

Kyle groaned as an insistent ringing shrieked in his ears, the lovely sound of someone calling his phone. He screwed his eyes shut, hoping that he'd get away with a nap. Last night didn't do much good for him, and seemed to make him even more restless.

"Fuck!" he called out, voice raspy.

Rolling onto his side, he grabbed the phone placed on his bedside

table.

Incoming call from: Mother

"Hello?" he answered, rubbing at his eyes.

"Kyle? Why aren't you over yet?"

He glanced over to his clock, 6:05 am.

"It's only six, Mum."

"And?"

"I'm on my way." Kyle said with a sigh, accepting that he'd have to leave the comfort of his bed. Something that felt rather empty with only him in it.

"Don't forget to eat breakfast, you know how cranky you can get!"

"Thanks, Mum."

\* \* \*

><p>"The time is 6:05 am, Mr. Cartman."</p>

"Thank you, Haley." Cartman hummed, finally clambering out of bed. His stomach rumbled with the movement, begging for food. He ignored it for now.

"How's the stock?"

"Up by 2.30%, sir."

"Good." he paused with a loud yawn, the corners of his eyes becoming watery. He continued with, "Did you book me a room?"

"Yes, sir." Haley stepped into his line of sight, her dress neat and tidy as she held Cartman's outfit of the day.

Both were nearly blinded by the light streaming in through the windows, casting an angelic glow among the pair. He turned his back to Haley, arms raised. In the next instant the softness of cotton encircled his arms, the white dress shirt still warm from the iron.

Neither cared that Cartman was still in his boxers, Haley had seen him at his lowest and highest point. And it wasn't as if she was an intern anymore, those years were hell on earth. The time where every day was a battle, trying her hardest to trudge through the sadistic mind games.

But it was all worth it, to earn his trust. And to be awarded a hefty pay, with benefits.

"Are you looking forward to it?"

Fine to button up his own shirt, Cartman darted his gaze up to his assistant's face. Curiosity and perhaps even companionship, unlike

the common snakes that tried to poison his life on a daily basis.

She needs something to keep quiet, but nothing big to get her hopes up. Keep them wanting, and in the palm of your hand.

He shrugged, feigning an indifference to the event. "Not much has changed, I'll bet you that. Same assholes, but coupled up with lesser ones."

Haley nodded in understanding, but she didn't know, not really. South Park was engraved in Cartman's veins, thickening it until it boiled into a desire of wealth and independence. Without that small town, he may not have been able to claw his way to the top. To realize how ruthless he could be, murder notwithstanding.

"But surely there isn't only, er-unpleasant people in South Park. I was even informed of a new mayor and police force taking over."

Cartman laughed, a loud and hearty sound. "You can't honestly believe that, can you, Haley? Use some of those brain cells God gave you for once!" he simpered.

Haley flushed with the comment, but said nothing to defend herself. The topic may seem lighthearted right now, but her boss was quick to turn that into a heated argument. Those days left her in the nearest bathroom, trying her best to quieten her sobs. Any attempt to tame him left her with far more scars, and the reminder that his time in jail was necessary.

"No matter the smell, shit is shit. And the same goes for corruption, and honey, South Park is exactly that. Corrupt."

Giving her a toothy smile, Cartman grabbed his pants from his assistant's folded arms. Seconds later, he was zipped up and ready to take on the day.

Ideas rolling inside her head, Haley pondered if she should approach it again. But it was a stupid idea, and already Mr. Cartman appeared irritated with her. Best to not push her luck. But despite all of these warnings, Haley couldn't contain herself.

"And what about you, sir?"

The frankness of her words startled both of them, but Cartman was momentarily fazed. His expression receded upon itself, and lacked all of its signature flair. That look both chilled and excited her, a deadly concoction.

"I'm the biggest one." he admitted, striding over to grab his phone from a glossy table. "And South Park best remember that."

Kenny's message popped inside of his head, it may have been written in a drunken haze. But that didn't make it any less true.

\*\*Then South Park better look out, 2 sexy guys are on their way...\*\*

If only Kenny knew how true that statement was.

### 3. How To Remove Mothballs

"No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home & rests his head on his old, familiar pillow." - Lin Yutang

\* \* \*

><p>Followed constantly by the looming wrath of his mother, slowly Kyle made the drive over to South Park. The early morning cleared up to reveal a sunny day, something that did little to chase away the choppy wind. And yet the sky remained cheerful, a brilliant shade of yellow. Like a giant yolk, just sizzling until it popped and hissed.</p>

His phone pinged, grating on his sleep-deprived nerves. Kyle huffed, sparing the seat across from him a fleeting look. Whoever it was, they'd just have to wait.

The roads were bad enough, traffic barely inching along. His mother was right, surprisingly. He should have left sooner. But he'd never admit that, at least not to her.

"Come on." he grumbled, leaning over to grab his travel mug. Liquid energy. Better known as coffee, was filled to the brim. He nosily blew on the steaming mug, before he took a mighty large gulp of the tar.

The cafe he frequented appeared rather busy, like always. And so, in his hurry, Kyle lowered his standards to a common coffeehouse. It wasn't generally bad, if you could stomach it.

He gave another shudder. It was certain that the coffee was coating his stomach in a layer of death, but man did it wake you up. Which made sense, as far as Kyle could tell, truckers solicited that shop like crows on a rotting carcass.

The inexpensive price and the busty waitresses, probably contributed highly to this.

"Are you kidding me!" Kyle groaned. He placed the mug back into its cup holder, hand burnt from the immense heat. Slender fingers drummed against the leather steering wheel, anxious to get out this jam.

The red metal from the van in front of him, clawed at his eyes as it reflected the sun's harsh rays. It didn't look like it'd be moving any sooner.

Great, he was going to be late again. His mum was going to be so pissed.

\* \* \*

><p>Kenny McCormick was so fucking excited, this reunion was going to be <em>sweet!</em>

Cartman hadn't showed up yet, so Kenny didn't find any issue with shooting back a couple of beers in his honour. This all happened at Skeeter's Bar and Cocktails to be exact.

Despite it being pretty fucking early in the morning, already there was a handful of patrons filling the bar.

"Hasn't changed at all." Kenny mumbled under his breath. He took another large gulp from his beer, a local invention. It perfectly captured the image of South Park, cheap and shitty. But man, did it ever get you drunk.

"Kenny?"

The blonde jolted to life, surprised by his name tainting the air. He was even more surprised to see a familiar face, one that wasn't greyed with cigarette yellowing teeth.

Stan Marsh.

"Stan!?" Kenny called out, scampering from his booth.

Eagerly the pair joined in a hug, tightly clinging to one another. At once old memories popped up, ones that Kenny long forgot.

"What are you doing here?" Stan asked, face genuinely happy as they stepped away from one another.

"Oh, just having a beer." the shorter man admitted, nodding towards his abandoned drink.

Stan chuckled, shaking his head in disbelief, "It's not even 8 AM yet, dude."

Kenny lazily laughed, slinking back to his booth. He didn't have to look over his shoulder to know Stan followed, and seemed delighted to sit across from him.

"Well, it won't look as bad when I have company."

"What, you plan on cheating on me?" Stan asked jokingly, Kenny shared a quiet laugh with him, happy to fall into old habits.

"No," Kenny said after a moment, "Cartman is going to grace my presence."

Stan choked on his laughter, eyes widening as he stared at the blonde man.

"\_Eric\_ Cartman?"

"Yep."

"Bu-man, I haven't thought of Cartman in years! He like, disappeared straight after high-school."

Kenny nodded, once again grabbing his beer. The sweating glass bottle greeted his clammy hand, mingling together until they dripped down onto the wooden table.

"What does he even do?" Stan pondered, rubbing at the back of his neck. Kenny merely shrugged in response, not entirely sure.

His companion frowned at the lack of information, before his shoulders dejectedly fell.

"I think he's in business?"

"Well that's not much of a surprise. Like what, real estate?"

Kenny laughed at that one, tossing his head back until his hair brushed against the booth's cushions. Stan flushed, slightly embarrassed. In order to defend himself, he loudly spoke out, "I mean, like scams or something! Let's be honest here, Cartman couldn't have changed that much."

"You got that right, Stan." Kenny hummed, offering Stan a smile before he took another large gulp of his beer.

\* \* \*

><p>"Bubby!" Sheila Broflovski called out, tears streaming down her face as she bounded down the porch.<p>

She was always so emotional during these times, like he went off for war. Only it sort of was to her, instead of dodging bullets, her son fought for justice in the courtroom.

Her eldest child had left the nest, and was awfully alone in the city. Which wouldn't have happened if Kyle married a nice Jewish girl, which obviously wasn't going to happen. But that didn't stop her from persistently trying to be a matchmaker.

"Mum." Kyle passively greeted, climbing out his car. Immediately he was embraced in a bear-hug, slowly suffocating in the scent of lavendar, and ever faint kasha.

She smelt like home. He...he was home.

"I missed you, bubbly!" his mother sobbed into his jacket, fingers tightening their hold until her talons dug into his clothed skin.

In practiced control, Kyle withheld a flinch. And lovingly patted on his mother's back, ignoring the sudden rise in emotions in him.

"I missed you too." he mumbled at last, pressing his head into his mother's mass of hair.

"Shelia, let the poor boy go." a voice called out from the background, evidently from the same porch his mother had just left.

Kyle smiled when his mother suddenly let go of him, but not because of his new-found freedom. "Hey, dad."

Tired from countless piles of paperwork, Gerald leaned his weight against his home's door. With the struggle at his job and his wife's constant worrying, Gerald was worn down to just a shell. Still, his eyes lite up at the sight of his family together.

"Kyle." he said with a wave of his hand, motioning for his son to enter his embrace. His luggage was still in his car's trunk, but that was momentarily forgotten. He leapt at the chance, quickly clearing

the distance between them until he was a foot away.

He hesitated, unsure if his time away made him...\_different\_. Or if his father found him off-putting, now that he aware his son was gay. If he thought so, Gerald didn't say anything.

Based on his pure caution, Kyle rose his hand for a hand shake. Common and practical, something he was sure his father could respect. Be proud of...

"Kyle." Gerald sighed, shoulders drooping at the gesture. This is when Kyle suddenly flinched, heartbeat fluttering like a butterfly with a broken wing.

His father grabbed his arm, yanking his son into a hug. No words were said, but they certainly weren't needed.

Sheila filled the silence with her voice, loud and frequent. And just like always, it sliced cleanly through.

"What are we waiting here for? Let's get ourselves some food, poor Kyle must be famished!"

"Mum, I'm not a child anymore!"

"Don't take that tone with me, young man."

"Leave the boy alone, Sheila!"

Kyle was glad to be home, honestly, he was. Deep down...somewhere...

\* \* \*

><p>Meanwhile a similar event was taking place, but the newly deemed lawyer wasn't aware of it. The only difference was it happened for Eric Cartman, and the results were not quite the same.</p>

With all of his efforts and plans to lose contact with his whore of a mother, still Cartman found himself unable to escape her.

He liked to consider himself a rational man, not to mention a genius in a world of idiots. So why return? Moments like these, Cartman hated not having the answers.

It boiled his blood, making it sing out for violence. If he was younger then maybe he'd ease those desires, but times are different. He's different. Better. Cartman 2.0

"You'll be fine, sir." Haley encouraged, going as far as to pat her employer's arm.

He didn't feel fine, he didn't want to do this.

But fuck it, he was Eric Cartman and he isn't scared of anyone. And certainly not his mother.

The call button was pressed, sending a high pitched ringing through the air. Each ring had Cartman's heart pounding in his chest.

\*\*Thump\*\*. \*\*Thump.\*\*

"Hello?"

\_No. No. Mission Abort. Fuck. He was bailing. Fuckkk.\_

That hand on his arm pressed harder, a reminder of Haley's feminine presence.

"Hello?" his mother tried again, voice timid and sweet. \_A fucking lie\_; he still felt the same desire to punch something, to scream until he couldn't anymore.

"Hello, Mother."

"E-Eric?"

"Yes, it's me." Cartman rolled his eyes, she was still stupid. "Unless you had more children I need to know about." That was meant to be a joke, but it came out bitter. He frowned at the feeling, of letting his emotions colour his actions. Haley's eyes never left him, unwavering with pity.

"Of course not, you're my precious angel!"

Haley scoffed at that, struggling to keep her giggles secret. She didn't fare well, and Cartman glared at her in response.

She stayed quiet after that.

"\_Right\_. I wanted you to know that I'm showing up for the reunion, do you want me to pay you a visit?"

"Oh! Of course, 'hun! Does Mummy have to lend you any money?"

"No, Mom."

"Alright, 'hun. Then show up at any time, besides nighttime! Mummy has to work during the night."

Cartman grunted in response, unconsciously running a hand through his hair. Fucking disgusting.

"See you soon then, 'hun!"

He didn't grace her with a response, and instead hung up.

"Sir, wasn't that rude?"

Cartman narrowed his eyes at the question, eyeing the assistant sprawled across his luxurious hotel bed. Well, as high-quality as South Park got.

"I don't pay you for personal questions, Haley. Did you order me lunch? I still plan on meeting Kenny for a couple of drinks."

"Quite well said, sir." Haley mumbled, before slowly sliding off of the bed. Smoothing the fabric of her dress as she stood back up, she gave him a careful look-over.

"Will that be everything, sir?"

"Yes."

He didn't watch her leave, door slowly closing shut behind her. Eric Cartman didn't need anyone but himself, he was strong now. Or that's what he told himself.

"Fuck!" he roared out, flinging his cell away from him. The device shattered into sharp pieces, scattering across the floor.

Cartman was left with his thoughts, a dented hotel wall, and a broken cell. He fucking hates South Park, that's why it's so easy to watch them burn. And burn they shall.

#### 4. Dinner Substitutes, Aka Beer

"One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood." - Lucius Annaeus Seneca

\* \* \*

><p>Kyle was putting away his clothing in his old bedroom when his mother called out from below, "Kyle, the food is ready!"<p>

He paused for a moment, gauging how hungry he was before he finally settled on being peckish.

"Alright, Mum!"

Gone were his old posters and childhood toys, everything he associated this room with. His parents were quick to transform his room into just another guest bedroom, updated to the likeness of one of his mother's home decor magazine projects.

The dark blue paint from his youth was changed to a pistachio green, which only served to remind Kyle that his mother was nutty. And even the carpeting was ripped out, hardwood taking its place. It was startling how people don't stay the same and move on without you. Partially he wanted it to be the same, with his Terrance and Phillip memorabilia, and his old bed-frame that creaked if he slightly moved on it.

But his parents didn't care, and for all of their hassle in his current life, they adjusted fine to his absence. He hated this, being so forlorn and nostalgic. That same helpless drifting returned, like a scab that you couldn't help but pick at. And those blue eyes surfaced again, piercing his heart in a fatal swoop.

"Kyle, it's getting cold!"

He sighed as he glanced around his room.

"I'm coming, Mum!"

He saw no point in changing for a simple family dinner, despite it being the first one in years. The occasional holiday get-together notwithstanding. So he wore jeans and a band shirt he had found in the back of his closet, which smelt of mothballs.

Bare feet stomped on their way down, announcing his arrival to the rest of his small family.

The plates were already set, leaving his father and Ike to patiently wait for him. His mother seemed to be getting something from the kitchen, most likely the finishing piece for the meal.

Kyle took his seat next to his younger brother, smiling as he met his gaze. The adopted Canadian looked superb, adjusting well to the stress of high school life.

Ike welcomed him with a contagious grin, "Hey, Kyle."

"Hey. How's school?"

"Great, I got 80% on my last test!"

Kyle politely smiled in response, shifting in his seat so he could pat his brother on the head. This quickly turned into a tousling of the hair.

Ike whined as he tried to get out of Kyle's grasp, "Stop, not the hair!"

Akin to his older brother, Ike was obsessed with how his hair appeared not only to himself, but to others. He even managed to convince their mother to purchase expensive hair products for him, and made sure his hair was constantly brushed back in a lazy, but elegant way.

Kyle eyed his brother's silky black locks, envious at how easy it was for Ike to tame it.

Sheila burst into the dining room, clutching a steaming pot of spaghetti. Whistling under her breath, she placed it on the table, mindful of the trivet underneath.

"Dinner is served!"

And with that, each member of the Broflovski family was eager to get their own plateful of pasta and eat away. The evening was chased away as everyone shared both new and old stories, while the majority of the conversation was focused on Kyle's new life. How the firm was going, if he made any new friends. The answer to the latter was a fleeting amount, and none of certain importance. And finally, if he found himself a partner yet.

Kyle took this for a male lover, but it was obvious that his mother meant a Jewish girl.

After an awkward bout of silence, Gerald took it upon himself to have the conversation going again.

"Well, just wait Kyle. You'll find yourself too busy with reminiscing with old friends, maybe the old gang will form again?"

"Yeah." Kyle mumbled with the thought, twirling his fork around his food. A lump arose in his throat, perhaps just as much from excitement as it was fear. Either way, Kyle had a feeling that tomorrow was going to be impressive, and would have a definite impact

on his life.

\* \* \*

><p>"Look, man. I gotta go."</p>

Kenny clicked his tongue in disapproval, his nose crinkling. "That's so lame, just stay for a couple more."

Stan passed his beer absently between his hands, liquid dangerously sloshing along the brim. He never meant to get a drink, but Kenny somehow talked him into it. Maybe it was the nerves, he was getting seriously pumped up for this reunion. It wasn't the same when he was on the water, tracking the movement of a pod of whales, but it was similar.

"I'm not sure, I promised Wendy I wouldn't have anything."

"Wendy? You guys got back together, fucking finally." Kenny smirked, raising his bottle up, "Then cheers, to long overdue relationships!"

Stan hummed to that, face softening. "We're not serious or anything, well...we sort of are."

"Are you screwing?"

He cleared his throat, not quite wanting to make a comment on that. To his embarrassment he felt his ears heat up, much like his face.

"You are!" Kenny chortled, leaning back in his seat. "Shut up, Kenny." Stan hissed, rubbing at his face.

"Started without me?"

It was a plain rhetorical question, but it scared Stan witless. Flinching away from the smooth voice, Stan spilt beer down his shirt.

"Fuck!" Stan cursed, immediately rubbing at the wet spot. He was going to make himself look like an idiot in front of Wendy, a stupid drunkard.

"Money-bags!" Kenny called out, eyes glittering as he abruptly stood up.

\_He's more drunk than I thought\_, Stan mused. And as he still wiped at his shirt, he tossed a look over to what had Kenny so excited.

"Fuck."

"Is that all you can say, Marsh?" Eric Cartman chuckled.

\_Fuck...\_

This wasn't the same boy from his youth, the curves he expected were gone. And man did he look good.

Eric snorted, dismissing the gawking hippie and turned his attention to Kenny. "What the fuck, I thought you'd wait for me?"

"I never said I would, money-bags." Kenny sighed, placidly sitting back on his seat. The leather squealed with his return.

"Shows your lack of manners. Move over."

"Says you." Kenny sneered, but still moved. Eric was buying him a round after-all, and he could assuredly afford it.

"So how's...er, sorry. What do you do?" Stan pitifully asked. Wow, he couldn't believe this was the same Eric.

"Kenny didn't tell you? I figured that'd be the first thing out of his mouth."

"I did, but not in much detail."

Cartman sighed, waving over a waitress. "A cold beer, doesn't matter what. Just as long as it's good." He eyed Kenny, waiting until the blonde shook his head and gestured to his half-full beer.

"Stan?"

"Um, no thanks." This is so fucking weird, Eric Cartman being actually polite for once. Man, he couldn't wrap his head around it.

"To answer your question, I'm a CEO of a couple of businesses." Cartman said, but only when a nice and cold beer was in hand.

"Is the money good?" Being a marine biologist didn't pay that well, but he was fine with that. He was really in it for the passion, which satisfied him at the end of the day. And he'd rather be poor and with Wendy in his bed than to be rich and lonely.

"Oh sure, I'm loaded. But the real issue is boredom."

"Boredom?" Kenny finally questioned, brow furrowed.

"Yeah, the business side is easy and everything. The only sore aspect is everyone begging for a slice, it can pick at someone, you know?"

Kenny and Stan nodded solemnly. They may never be as rich as Eric, but they understood greed. "No girlfriend?"

"Or boyfriend." Kenny whispered into his glass, careful so only Cartman heard. He wasn't sure if his sexuality was a taboo or not, and he didn't want to risk it. Not with the sense of intensity wafting off of the brunette.

"Nope." Cartman said, popping the p in the word. "But that won't be the case for long, not with my ability at having sex. Plus, I'm too busy for a commitment."

"That sucks, man. No one has your eye?"

"I fucked this tanned guy a couple of days ago, but no. Nothing legit."

Stan had decided to take a large gulp of his beer at that moment, and immediately spit it out. Bubbles both dwelled inside his nose, and burned it.

\_So much for keeping it a secret\_, Kenny thought as he shook his head.

"You're gay?!" Stan choked out, alcohol dripping down the side of his face.

"Bisexual." Cartman corrected, taking a sip out of his own. "It's nothing important, Marsh. Why, interested?"

Forget earlier. Stan was now burning up like a fucking torch, surely enough to burn the bar to a smoldering crisp.

"Doesn't matter, you're not my type." Cartman said with a smirk, eyes roaming over Stan's body. Not caring that Stan was aware of this, he slowly rose his eyes to the pair of muddled blue.

He flashed him a toothy grin, the exact definition of a predator. Stan wasn't even gay, and yet he found himself frozen and...slightly aroused. Okay, maybe more than slightly.

"Didn't you have somewhere to go?"

\_Oh shit. Wendy.\_

"I gotta go!" Stan exclaimed, thoughts solely on the woman waiting for him. "I'll see you later at the reunion!" he called over his shoulder, darting towards the exit.

"Idiot." Cartman rumbled under his breath, taking a lengthy sip from his beer. Haley was probably worried, wondering where he disappeared off to. If he got kidnapped, and if she needed to phone the police. She'd probably message him an ungodly amount, which he'd never get. He threw his broken cell into the trash, never to be used again.

His hand tightened around the glass.

"Hey."

He looked up, "What?"

Kenny took a minute before responding, wary of Cartman's facial expression.

"Are you okay?"

Cartman covered his guilt and anger up with a smirk, "Peachy."

## 5. The Reunion

\_That's the fun of going to a high school reunion: it's seeing the people who you were close to all of those years ago, and re-exploring

the relationships of the past." - Jon Hurwitz\_

\* \* \*

><p>This is it...the big day.</p>

Kyle eyed his reflection. He was ready. Today was important, but he didn't want to seem desperate. Especially if he did see...\_him.\_

Wearing a fern green dress shirt, the cuffs were rolled up to his elbows. His gaze rose to his hair, looking like a mess as ever. A particular curl stood out, stretching out in the air towards the sun. He should have had a haircut before he came here.

"You look nice."

The red haired lawyer turned around, smiling at the sight of his younger brother. Ike leaned against the door frame, still in his pajamas.

"The Ninja Turtles, really?"

Ike scratched at his head, having yet to have a shower, "What? They're kick ass!"

That got him a chuckle, sibling wearing a questionable grin as he faced the mirror again. "I was always partial to Donatello myself."

"That's no big surprise."

Kyle hesitated, hand caught in between hair preening. "What is \_that\_ supposed to mean?"

They met each other's gaze through the mirror. Ike offered him a lazy smile, appearing like a sighing Casanova. "Forget about it, Mum wants you downstairs."

He groaned aloud, trying to pat down his hair. The russet curls just sprung back up, popping up with a vengeance.

\_Fan-fucking-tastic.\_

Giving up, Kyle followed his brother's lead and made his way down the stairs with a grimace. All the while, he questioned whether his mother was going to talk his ear off about finding a nice girl at the reunion, and how long that would take. He figured half an hour, but only if his father was there to cut it short. Unfortunately that ship had already sailed, and the older lawyer was safely at his firm. Away from his wife's insistent nagging.

"Kyle!" his mother whined, outright cringing at the sight of her son. Typical. And much like when he was in high-school, Sheila Broflovski found it incredibly important to inspect her child's appearance for any flaws. At least the shirt got a nod, his pants however, were a mere sin to behold.

"\_Skinny jeans?\_" she hissed out, disgust marring her features.

He rolled his eyes, "Mum, relax. It's just a reunion, I'm not meeting

anyone famous, like the president." Seriously, old age was making her be quite a handful.

"That's what you think. It starts out like that, and next thing you know, you're wearing sweatpants and living on the streets!"

Kyle sighed. "Mum, I know you care. But you need to relax, it's just clothing." he leaned down to give her a kiss to the forehead, "Now I have to leave before I'm late, I love you."

"I love you too, bubbly." his mother mumbled, happy for now. Pacified with her child's affections, she shooed him out the door. Clicking her tongue in distaste at the thought of his tardiness, which had nothing to do with her ranting. Kyle climbed into his crappy car, stomach clenching as butterflies danced along its surface. This is it.

\* \* \*

><p>The first thing Kyle noticed when he entered his old high-school was the teen sitting by the front, bored and tapping away at her phone. Remembering his brother back home, he approached the improvised desk with a smile. It took her a minute before she actually unglued herself from the bit of technology, squinting at the shadow looming over her.<p>

"Name?"

"Kyle. Kyle Broflovski."

Shaking blunt bangs away from her eyes, she pulled a stained book closer to her person. "How do you spell that?"

"Oh. B-r-o-f-l-o-v-s-k-i"

There was a pause as she read her way down the list until she eventually made it to the bottom, at that point she glanced back at him with a frown.

"You aren't on the list."

"...What?" This had to be some sick joke.

The young teenager huffed as she turned the book around for him to see, pointing at the surnames beginning with an 'o'.

"I don't know what to tell you, there isn't any 'ob' on here, sir."

It took Kyle a second to digest that, and slowly he managed to grit out a response.

"When I said 'o', I meant it as in '\_Oh\_', okay. I will now begin to tell you my last name'. Not the letter, alright?"

"...Then why didn't you say that in the beginning? You're here."

He heavily exhaled through his nose, calming his seething temper with a tense smile. "Thank you."

"No problem, but before you go..." she snatched up his left hand, stamping it hard in blue ink. Ignoring the pain, he ripped it away before heading inside. Acutely aware of the sneer she sent him.

Only led by the crudely made arrows that were plastered on the walls with glittery glue, Kyle made his way to the gymnasium. The first thing that hit him was the intense perfume and the noise, which sounded like a frat house picked up a record to appear both aloof and quirky.

"Kyle!"

He looked off to the side and found himself grinning at Leopold Scotch, or better known as Butters.

"Hey, Butters!" he greeted back, and was caught off guard by the immediate hug. Patting him awkwardly on the back, he was a lot more comfortable when the blonde finally released him.

"It's been so long!"

"Don't I know it." Kyle admitted, grin inching onto his face. "So, how are you?"

"Great! I stayed in South Park, which became a lot better. And I started my own dancing school, which is good."

"That's awesome! You look like things are going terrific for you."

Nodding, Butters gave him a look over, "Gosh, I can't believe I'm talking to you. I guess you went off to do something big and important, you went to university right?"

"Yep. I ended up in law and everything, I work at a firm back in Denver."

His company whistled in astonishment, "Cool. H-have you spoken to anyone else?" Kyle shook his head, feeling slightly pathetic.

"Well you should join us, Kenny is over there!"

Kyle's breath was caught in his throat. "He is?"

Butters smiled in response, and after grabbing his elbow, steered him towards a small group by the far right wall. And sure enough, there he was. Dressed in a pair of cut up jeans and an orange hoodie. Alongside him was Clyde Donovan, Token Black, and some guy that Kyle never spoke to.

And much like before, Kyle was pulled into an eager hug.

"Kyle!" Kenny exclaimed into his ear, fingers digging into his sides as he tried to bring him as close as possible. "I've missed you so much!"

"I missed you too." Kyle laughed, pulling away. It sucked, he really meant to keep in contact with all of his old friends. But being a lawyer was tough, and his time was spent by either working or going to bars to find himself someone.

He nodded at the other three guys, and stared a bit longer at Clyde. Well, at Clyde's t-shirt which said, \*\*Sex Instructor: First Lesson Free\*\*.

"Lovely." he muttered, not believing the lack of etiquette. Maybe his mother was right.

"So, Kyle."

He turned back to his childhood friend. "How's life?"

"Good. How about yourself?"

"Wonderful, but single."

"A pity." Kyle automatically replied, smile returning.

"Oh it is. Are you the same?"

Reluctantly he nodded, and glanced around the room. No sign of Stan yet.

"That sucks, but seriously what's with everyone? People are screwing anythin'."

"Is that so?"

Kenny gestured to the drink table; Kyle squinted against the dimmed lighting at two figures, Craig and Tweek. "Those two bastards are dating, and then there's Butters and Bebe."

"Wait, what?"

"Not officially, but they work together or something. Just like Stan and Wendy."

Kyle perked up, he felt like he was just slapped. Making sure that the other boys wandered off, no doubt bored with their conversation. He moved closer towards the blonde, whispering "You've talked to him recently?"

"Who, Stan?" His arms tingled. "Yeah."

"Yesterday, we had a couple of drinks. Okay, Stan had one. I swear the guy gets whipped at home by Wendy, he was completely begging to have her-"

"They're dating?" he interrupted, breath coming out short and shallow.

"...Yeah? What, am I talking to a brick wall or something?"

"No I heard you, I just...Fuck."

"Are you okay, man?" Kenny's warm hand pressed into his shoulder, weighing him down. Or was that his heart? Either way he couldn't do this, he needed to be somewhere. Anywhere. Just...fuck...

"I'm, uh, fine." Shit, he was going to throw up. What was he going to

say when he saw him?

"You don't look good..."

He was just about to reply, but struggled with the bitter taste that swelled in his throat. Before he could even manage to choke out a silly and useless excuse, a deep timbre cut him off.

"He can't help it, he's a Jew."

Feet moving on their own accord, they spun at the sound of Eric Cartman's voice. Any retort or witty comment he had was wiped away, as was any complaint he had of having to deal with Eric's shit.

True to his genetics, Eric towered over everyone in the room. That he expected, but not the fancy suit he was wearing. Dressed in a form fitted navy fabric, he looked like he had just gotten out of a business meeting and was ready to take over the world.

The bile in his throat was swallowed down, leaving his mouth to feel vacant and dry like a desert. Eric appeared to be saying something, but Kyle couldn't hear a word. Not with the blood that was rushing to his ears, throbbing like a drum.

\_How can he wear something so expensive, and act nonchalant? Fuck, he made the whole room seem like it was filled with hobos.\_

The hand at his side was raised to his face, and Kyle followed that hand. Watched as it brushed a couple of loose strands of chestnut hair, moving to join his slicked back hair.

He jolted in surprise, startled when Kenny slapped at his arm.  
"Wha...?"

"I said, Stan is coming over."

Completely forgetting about either of the two, Kyle peered upwards. And there he was, cute smile on his face as he made his way over. Only, he was dragging Wendy by his hand. Any happiness he had was gone with that revelation, and only a sense of dread resided.

"Hippies." Eric swore under his breath, "I need a smoke." And with that, he was walking towards the exit.

"Wait!" Kyle hollered, alarmed as his attractive friend/enemy began to leave. He hated to admit it, but Kyle was much too of a chicken shit to face Stan. And so he left Kenny to take his place with the apparent love-birds.

Kyle had to fight his way through the dancing bodies of former students that cramped up the room, dodging elbows that threatened to jab him in the face or ribs. He was taller than most, a fact he always thanked his father silently for, but even he couldn't seem to look beyond the mass of writhing adults. His only saving grace was following Cartman's form, which wasn't hard to do, not with how it stood out against the others.

They finally ended up outside in the restricted parking lot, cool weather there to welcome them.Flushed with having to jog to keep up

with Eric's long stride, Kyle fought to get himself back under control.

Reaching into his pocket, Eric withdrew a packet of cigarettes and a silver lighter. "Want one?"

Kyle shook his head, more keen to watch Eric's lips clamp around the recently lite cigarette and take a deep suck. Warmth scratching at his cheeks and throat, Kyle stared at less...arousing things. Like the plastic grocery bag that blew across the lot, dancing in the wind. That's when he realized how absurd this situation was, staying in the comfort of someone who he hated for so long. And for the right reasons, unjust prejudice, and countless acts that set him on edge. Now he was thinking about that same man, forcing him against his desk at the office. He shivered again, unsure about himself.

"So..."

His heart quaked at such a small and insignificant word.

"How have you been?"

Okay. "Shitty." H-he didn't mean to say that, but there it was. A deep sound lolled beside him, and it took him a moment to realize it was Eric chuckling.

"I figured. You look like you haven't slept in weeks."

This was his chance to protest against these claims, to talk about his fantastic job and flat. But silence persisted, and Kyle was fine with that. It felt like he wasn't the only one to embrace that loneliness, and Eric was the same way. At least he wasn't married, Kyle had searched in vain for a gold band on his big fingers, but there was none.

He was glad. It wouldn't be fair if Eric had a partner, someone to share himself and his wealth with. Why should he, when Kyle didn't have that same right? He shivered again.

"Can you not afford a fucking coat?"

Kyle sucked in his breath, "Why?"

Eric snorted, "You're shaking like a leaf over there."

Kyle opened his mouth, but fabric covered the words. He whined as he pulled it away from his face, glaring at the younger man beside him.

Eric shrugged, "I don't want you to bitch."

Shifting his weight, Kyle put on the jacket. As soon as his coat was gone, Eric was left only in a white dress shirt. He was still big, but not like before. Fat was taken in exchange for muscle, but that didn't make him any less hefty. It was naturally his build, and it made Kyle feel even smaller when he put on the jacket. It was a couple of sizes too big for him, and his hands were lost in the fabric. But it was warm, and smelt of vanilla, smoke, and some musk that was both dark and irresistible.

Light headed, Kyle found himself sinking deeper into the jacket. He never wanted to take it off, he didn't care what anyone else said.

Clueless, Eric took another long drag. The smoke curled on his tongue and down his throat, before he exhaled. He watched as the grey tendrils disappeared into the sky, never to be seen again. "Why are you here?"

"Huh?"

Eric rolled his eyes, "Shouldn't you be socializing with the others, and not being with me? Last time I checked, you hated my guts."

The day-walker beside him clutched at his coat, looking both adorable and lost in it. Like a child playing dress up in his father's clothes. Not like he'd ever know. He took another drag from the cigarette, not stopping until his lungs begged for fresh oxygen. He released it all.

"I was, but it can get...depressing. What about you?"

"I don't want to be there when the shit hits the fan." Aware of the stare directed at him, Eric went on with a smirk, "Kenny and I put some LSD in the punch, things are going to get fucking amazing."

Kyle broke out into a laugh, ringing out in the empty space and it was completely genuine. Leave it to Eric to take such a mundane thing and make it a disaster, and he loved it. Not him necessarily, but something deep and hidden. Maybe it was the stress and hurt, but he wanted something strange to happen in his life.

After that he wasn't even taken aback when Eric pulled out a flask from the back of his pant's pocket. Surprisingly Eric offered it to him, perhaps because of the company he provided, and yet he accepted it. That's how they spent the next thirty minutes, each taking turns sipping until it was empty.

Which was a lot stronger than he expected, and he wasn't positive if it was that or the vanilla. Was he being drugged on the scent of vanilla? Was that possible?

But he kissed him. And he shoved his tongue down his throat, or was that Eric's? He didn't know, but that was fine because Eric was kissing him back with the same amount of desperation. And for once in his life, he didn't think about his job, family, or him.

## 6. Forget-Me-Not Flowers

"A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." - George Bernard Shaw

\* \* \*

><p>The morning after was warm, but lacked the humidity of his own house. The old vents had a sort of liquid in them, so they made everything else feel foggy when you turned on the heating. Which was severely important in the colder months.</p>

This heat, however, was like chocolate chip cookies right out of the oven. It was comforting, and Kyle enjoyed it immensely. He snuggled in closer to the fabric, wondering why he couldn't sleep like this always. Blinking against the sunlight, Kyle sighed aloud. Instead of disrupting the surreal silence of the room, instead the sound perfectly blended within. The fabric transformed into a large hand, fingers rough with untold labour. Stretched open, they slid along his rib cage, fingering the bones. And just like a xylophone, Kyle called out in bliss.

Lower back aching as he did so, Kyle followed that arm back to its owner.

Like all of his one-night stands, Kyle expected a certain shade of black hair when he awoke. Sometimes it was there, but it was the person underneath the hair he wanted. Sadly they were never him, no matter how hard he tried. And that only left them with awkward conversations, until they left his bed. Most offered their phone numbers in exchange for sex, but Kyle never called back. Either because of his pride or the promise he was holding out for someone else.

So when he awoke today, he was utterly astonished to see a familiar face blinking against the same crisp light. Instead of Stan it was a man who Kyle never thought of in any sexual regard before, Eric Cartman.

And the first thing out of his mouth was "Fuck."

Eric chuckled, withdrawing that hand splayed on Kyle's side to stretch. Immediately Kyle missed the extra warmth, it felt like a large and secure blanket.

"That's what we did." Eric mumbled through a yawn, half of the words were indistinguishable.

Gauging what he said, Kyle's eyes widened and he scooted as far away as the bed would allow. Even in a king sized bed, Eric took up a good portion of the space and made Kyle's attempt foolish and futile.

"I..." he didn't know what to say, any possible bit of conversation was gone from his person. Thoughts and questions were plentiful. Why couldn't he remember it? Was it...was he good? Never before was he self conscious about his abilities, but that measuring and weighing look in Eric's eyes had him re-evaluating everything.

"Where are we?" he settled with. It was obviously a bedroom, something done to modern standards. Everything about it screamed business, with its bulky desk in the corner, to the navy blue stripes that went well with the white undertones of everything.

"My hotel room." Eric answered, and once again Kyle found himself eyeing the man beside him.

Unlike yesterday, Eric's slicked back hair was ruffled to a more natural state. He sort of hoped that the brunette's hair would look crumpled and hideous, something to boost Kyle's self-esteem. But like everything else in Kyle's life, it was the exact opposite. The

chestnut locks were messily tousled, much like how Ike's were, but in a mature way that his brother lacked. But Eric always did have nice hair, or from what Kyle could remember.

Speaking of which, either unaware or just confident with his body, Eric ran his fingers through his hair before he climbed out of bed. And much like what he blatantly said before, Eric's light ivory skin flashed before Kyle's eyes as he made his way over to the desk. Only to reveal he wasn't naked, but dressed in a nice pair of black boxer briefs. Heart pounding in his ears, Kyle flushed with both lust and disappointment.

"You're not naked."

Eric grabbed the hotel's landline telephone before he graced the confused lawyer with an actual reply, "Obviously, people come in and out of here like it's a revolving door. That, and I need to prepare if I have to make a dash for it."

He punched in a few numbers as Kyle digested that, only to be welcomed with a few rings.

Kyle blinked. "Wait, why would you need to run? Are you scamming this place or something?!"

Eric shot him a glare, "Don't say shit like that so loud, you idiot! And to answer your fucking question, it's probably because you were annoying all of the other customers."

"Annoying them?"

"Who wouldn't be? With your loud moaning last night. Are you sure you aren't in any gay porno there,\_ Kahl?\_ 'Cause last night was-You have five minutes."

Frowning as Eric broke away from their discussion to hiss that last bit into the phone, he was even more startled when Eric slammed the receiver back down. Right. For a moment he forgot who he was dealing with. With his legs rubbing against the silken bed sheets, Kyle glowered against the sun's rays.

"First of all, they should be used to it. So they can go fuck themselves. And secondly, no. Not even in your most messed up dreams."

"I don't have to dream, I lived it." Eric cackled, "Remember? Last night?"

Kyle gripped the sheets hard and was sorely tempted to scream at Eric until his voice was hoarse. More so than it was already. But that pleasant ache throbbed again, reminding that they did have sex last night. And as far as he could recall, from hazy whispers and biting touches, it was fucking amazing. Well, Eric was. All Kyle could remember was reacting and laying back to take it all in.

Still, Eric didn't need to know that. And that it was the best he's had so far, but the other hotel occupants already knew that.

Just then, the door opened.

Yanking up the sheets until they were underneath his chin, Kyle dreadfully wished to be anywhere else. More so, when the woman in the door frame glared at him to her heart's content. His first rational thought was that their visitor was one of the staff members, ready to complain about the previous noise. And fuck, Eric would knock her ass over and make a run for it, leaving him to explain and pay for it all. That bastard.

"Haley." Eric addressed the angry woman, not caring that he was practically naked in front of her. She looked away from Kyle, which he was thankful for.

"Yes, sir?"

"Did you get it?" She nodded, handing over a glossy and fresh phone to Eric's out stretched palm.

"Thank you." he mumbled, flipping it over to look at the device at every possible angle. Satisfied, he rewarded the young woman with a fleeting smile that had one of her own dancing on her face.

"Sir, if I may?"

Eric yawned once again before giving Haley a curt nod of approval. Leaving the two alone, he headed over to the joined bathroom. Against the sound of the sink turning on, Haley loudly continued their conversation, never once moving a mere inch from her place.

"You have two meetings, one with that mining company, in about half an hour. And Mr. McCormick has been trying to get a hold of you, much like the hotel's staff who have certain...complaints." She directed that last bit at Kyle, hostile attitude returning full swing.

The tap turned off. "Fucking lovely, tell 'em I'll be there. And I'll deal with Kenny myself." He popped inside the bedroom, the fresh scent of mint in the air, "Did you tell 'em to fuck off?"

"Always, sir."

"Good. Now get the hell out of here!" Glad to see the blonde scamper away, Kyle eyed his one-night stand apprehensively.

"That goes for you too, Jew."

Sizzling with that same hurt, Kyle checked to see if he was wearing any underwear-which he wasn't, before he climbed out of bed. Immediately he missed the warmth that blocked his body from Eric's appraising eyes, which seemed content with this shift.

"You're such an asshole."

"Yeah, I know." Eric replied with a sneer, rolling his eyes. "Now hurry up, your Mummy is probably worried."

The thing is, he was right. She'd be frantic by now, clawing and screaming at anyone who would listen. Without a word, Kyle began to search for his clothing. But the floor was spotless...\_Shit.\_

Suddenly a hand was pressed against his spine, and Kyle shivered. "I

got Haley to wash 'em, I know how tidy you can be. They're in the dresser."

"Thanks." he had mumbled. That hand lowered to his ass, leaving only to give it a loud slap that shook Kyle, and sunk right into his core.

"Don't mention it, Jew."

Then Eric went off to the bathroom again, locking the door to have a shower. That was it, so Kyle quickly rummaged until he found his clothes in the bottom drawer and dressed before the desire to stay became too much.

Ever the gentleman, Eric left Kyle no means to return home. So Kyle had to make the tiresome walk to the car he left at the high-school's parking lot, which was across town. Feet crying out for mercy, Kyle hastily opened his car and slid inside.

"Holy shit." he swore, finally seeing himself in the car's mirror. His whole neck was littered in hickeys, making him look like he was stained from blueberries. And Eric had let him walk through town like this. Stewing in the scent of vanilla, smoke, and the musk of Eric fucking Cartman, Kyle made the long drive to his parent's home.

Making sure to do up his collar up high to mask the evidence, Kyle turned off and locked his car. After taking a few steady breaths, trying his hardest to ignore that scent that seemed to mock him, Kyle climbed out of his vehicle and headed inside. And just as he expected, he was immediately assaulted by the sound of his mother crying out his name. Hitting him at full force, she clutched at his shirt without any resolve of letting go.

He winced as she hit a certain patch of bruises on his back, leave it to Eric to cover all of his grounds.

"I was so worried, Kyle! We've been so worried, and neither your brother or father would comfort me!"

"I'm sorry, Mum. I spent the night at an old friend's, and forgot to call." Which wasn't a complete lie. But instead of spending the night talking and reminiscing like what his mother most likely thought of, he had spent the night getting happily fucked.

Something dawned on him, "Wait, who's here?"

"Oh, I completely forgot!" His mother eagerly ushered him into their living room, "Stan is here to see you!"

And sure enough, there he was, sitting awkwardly on his parent's couch. "Hey, Kyle." he said with a shy wave, smiling.

\*\*Fuck\*\*...

## 7. Oh, Mother Dearest: Part One

—"Our mothers always remain the strangest, craziest people we've ever

met." - Marguerite Duras\_

\* \* \*

><p>"What the fuck are you doing here?"<p>

That was the first sentence that came out of his mouth, and rightfully so it caused a chain reaction. Stan became flushed in embarrassment, while his mother looked like she was going to have a full fledged heart-attack.\_ Good job, Kyle. Good job...\_

"Kyle!" his mother screamed, face turning a startling shade of red. Honestly he just wanted to go home, to climb into his spacious bed and fall asleep forever. That is, if his mother didn't kill him first.

"I-I'll just go." Stan finally said after a few tense seconds, awkwardly rising to his feet. Kyle watched as he walked towards the door, when suddenly he couldn't stand it anymore.

"Wait!" Blindly he snatched up the sleeve to Stan's shirt, fingers digging in. He had to fix this, fix...\_them.\_

He shot his mother a begging glance. She still looked pissed, but thankfully she understood. Muttering under her breath, particularly about getting too old for this and grandchildren, she stormed upstairs.

"I'm sorry, can we start again?"

Stan turned around, blue eyes open like a summertime sky. "I've missed you, Kyle."

Immediately his face burned with desire, guilt, and discomfiture.  
\_Oh, Stan.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Cartman sighed loudly, "What?"<p>

"Nothing, sir. Nothing at all..."

"\_Haley.\_" he warned, eyeing the assistant that sat across from him. Her muddy brown eyes shifted away from his, not wanting to make contact.

\_1...2...3...4...\_ "Alright!" she finally broke, "I can't stand it!"

Rolling his eyes at Haley's outburst, he dug his frame deeper into the car seat. Might as well get comfortable, surely she'd take forever to talk his ear off.

"I don't like him."

Scratching at the side of his face, he'd need to shave again, Cartman hummed in disinterest. "Who?"

Groaning at the lack of response, Haley chewed on the inside of her cheek, "The ginger! You know, Keith."

"Haley, we both know you know his name."

"Kyle, whatever! I don't like him!"

Fuck it still being morning, he needed a drink. He reached into the mini-bar to his side, hand cooling as he grabbed a chilled bottle of rum. The seated blonde huffed as her employer became distracted, and was much too tired to complain about the time of day he drank.

She ripped the bottle from his grip and withdrew a can of coke from the same mini-bar. While she began to make his drink, she watched Eric through narrowed eyes.

"And you always said, never mix pleasure with business." she mumbled under her breath, chest squeezing painfully with the scarred wound.

"...First of all, he isn't a ginger. Day-walker, Haley. Day-walker. Secondly, we aren't working together and quit acting like I'm going to marry the guy. It was sex, that's it. And lastly, do we seriously need to be having this discussion again? I'm already balls deep in shit right now, and you aren't really helping."

Battling the automatic "I'm sorry, sir", Haley pressed the recently made drink into Cartman's grasp, wary when her hand was left wet from the sweating cup.

"It will be soon, the union to that mining company will be hiring a legal firm. Apparently the members don't like the fact that the business will be switching hands, especially to a younger man. Lucky for you, Mr. Broflovski will be part of that same team."

Cartman took a large gulp from his icy beverage with the revelation, already a muted buzz was there to greet him. He should have known things would get messy when he met Kyle, or fucked him to oblivion.

"The bearer of good news as always, Haley. So..." he paused with another sip, "you couldn't resist gathering info, hm?"

A blush was quick to work its way onto the usually composed woman's face, marring her beauty when it flashed with shame and anger.

"What did you expect of me, sir? You can't trust a man with cheekbones as sharp as those! They should be classified as a weapon, you could stab someone with them!" she loudly proclaimed, becoming more and more flustered as those eyes focused on her.

If only they eased up on their dissection and turned into a loving gaze, then she'd be happy.

But as of late she was limited to cleaning up after his flings, which seemingly ranged in shape and size on his whim that instance. Sadly she wasn't one of them, and she doubted she'd ever would be. Not if that...day-walker got in the way. Eric T. Cartman was a passionate man, but in bed he left his partners to do all of the work. Not that he wasn't good, it was just that he lacked the ferocity he usually held.

Kyle Broflovski had screwed everything up, because when they shared that night together...Something Haley could only recall in disgust, Eric was the exact opposite of his usual self. She was sure that everyone in the hotel and down the street heard the commotion, and going by the messages she received, they did. Some didn't mind, but the families with younger children did.

For a hotel claiming to be the best in their district, they sure did have paper-thin walls. If only it was her...

That one night, filled with heartbreak and cheap drinks might not have meant anything to him. But to Haley it was the beginning of a relationship, one filled with affection, deep conversations, and overall comfort(luxury).

"Haley, you're a real crazy bimbo."

Inwardly she winced at the joined chuckle, but she forced a smile of her own, "Er-thanks, sir."

"Anytime."

Glancing over her shoulder towards the driver's tinted glass, Haley hummed as her ear piece buzzed with a expectant update.

"Five minutes until we arrive."

\* \* \*

><p>"I didn't really get to see you at the reunion, man."<p>

"I know," Kyle shook his head, "I'm sorry, but I spent my time with Eri-Cartman."

Stan furrowed his brow, "Wendy wanted to see you too."

\_Well, I don't give a shit what Wendy wants.\_ "That's too bad, but I sort of felt obligated, you know?"

Clearly confused, Stan curtly shook his head. Kyle sighed, leaning back on his parent's couch. This is not what he imagined today would be like, sitting in his childhood living room and talking about Kyle's latest one-night stand.

The thing is, he hoped it'd be more then one night. Nothing exclusive, just a distraction from the beautiful man beside him. Only Stan didn't know anything about the sex. God, he hoped he never did find out.

"Cartman and I...we've always had this thing, a understanding. I felt like I had to talk to him, to move on."

"He did pull a lot of shit on you...on us." Stan admitted, rubbing at his eyes. He had bags under them, maybe he had insomnia too.

\_Or maybe he's too busy to sleep with Wendy su\_-

"Exactly." Kyle agreed, sounding a little too chipper to his own ears. Fake.

"Well I guess I can say this, you look good. And I mean it, man. But so does anyone that get's laid."

"Um, what?"

Stan held out his hands in front of himself, almost as he was shielding his person. "Relax. I'm not going to scream it out to the rooftops, but you should tell them to ease up next time. Looks like you were attacked by some horny vampires. But hey, must have been one hell of a night."

Blushing with sheer horror coursing through his veins, Kyle felt at his neck.

Shit, the collar must have slipped down, did his mother see too? Stan was bad enough. And all because of Eric fucking Cartman!

"It's cool, I don't think your mom saw." Stan laughed, guessing the thought racing through the red head's frantic mind. "I didn't come here to delve into you getting some action, so do you want to talk later? At a bar or something?"

Kyle couldn't have nodded faster, happy to get out of this situation.

"Right, my number is still the same. So text me later, and please wear a turtleneck or something."

The two climbed to their feet, offering each other an awkward handshake before Kyle walked Stan off onto the front porch.

After saying goodbye to his crush, Kyle locked the door behind Stan and bolted up the stairs. Safe in the bathroom, he quickly turned on the shower.

All he could smell now was vanilla, smoke, and that musk from before. Angrily he ripped his shirt off, not caring when a few of the buttons popped.

Fiddling with the heat to the water, Kyle finally saw it as he glanced to the mirror above the sink. Not the hickeys, he expected those. But the numbers on his back, written in permanent marker. Immediately he recognized the lazy but charismatic scrawl, it was Eric Cartman's phone number.

And following it, was a little note:

\_Call me when you're ready for round 2.\_

\_ - Eric C.\_

When did he...? And why in the fuck couldn't he remember Cartman writing on his back!?

#### 8. Oh, Mother Dearest: Part Two

\_ "My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it." - Mark Twain\_

\* \* \*

><p>Eric frowned at the reflection glaring at him, his own. Like always, he looked like he was trying too hard. Despite how often he worked out, or preened himself, he was a big loser.</p>

\_A fatass.\_

The door swung open, taking his image away.

"My baby!"

Eric winced as he was sucked up in a tight hug, arms as strong as steel wrapped around his sides. He struggled to pull her off of him, but each shove was futile.

"Mom!" he groaned, cheeks warming at the sound of Haley laughing from the parked car.

He should really fire her, maybe that would wipe the smirk off of her face.

"Just look at you, 'hun! You're all skin and bones!" and the next moment Eric was herded inside his old house.

"But who did you come with?" his mother giggled, eyeing the blonde that slipped in after the pair.

"Mom," Eric sighed, "this is Haley. She's my personal assistant that oversees boring aspects in my regular life, and maintaining my schedule."

"She's pretty."

"That's why he picked me." Haley joked, but it came out strained and bitter.

"Hm." Liane released her grip on her son. "Let me be the judge of that."

And true to her word, Liane Cartman circled around the young woman, face as stony as one of the mountains in the distance. Unlike the rest of her generation, she was treated well with age. She had a few grey hairs here and there, but they were pulled back in a fashionable bun, intricate and neat.

It alluded a sense of class, that the mother lacked throughout Eric's childhood. The mother he knew spent the mornings in bed watching her soaps in a house-coat, and would drink her troubles away with fruity wine coolers.

Not much changed with that growing up, but Eric had to face the world alone. To make his pay and actually keep the cheque without fear of it being spent behind his back. To do that he had to cut ties with his mother, until now.

"She's a cutie, I'll give her that. Just not as cute as I was, I could really turn some heads in my day. And I still can!" Liane ended with a dainty laugh, waving off the glare Haley sent her.

"I'm kiddin', hun!"

\_Leave it to my mother to upset any girl I bring home, not even a minute in the door\_, Cartman thought with a roll of his eyes.

"Are we going to talk or what?"

"Oh sure! I'll put something on for you to eat. We can have a chat in the living room, pumpkin." And just like that his mother was back to hanging off of him, ushering her tower of a son into the joined room.

"That won't be necessary, Ms. Cartman. I already prepared a meal for him today." Haley hurriedly said as she followed after them, glaring at the back of the older woman's head.

"That's sweet, but I know what Eric likes. And he prefers things made well done, something that was put together with thought. Okay, 'hun?'"

An awkward bout of silence followed after that, leaving Haley to stand in the door-frame as Eric was seated on the well used couch.

It was bizarre, Eric sitting in the room. He had described his life to her, but to see it now was quite a contrast. The effect was doubled by the grey suit he wore, much too expensive to be used in a simple area. She hated it here, it seems that the abnormal habits the town had were gone when Eric's friends grew up. And if that was so, the sleepy town then had no use for her. She'd much rather go back to her home, empty but clean with her tiresome work.

You had to live in success, to be prepared for it.

No, she wouldn't be pushed around. Giving a sound stomp in defiance(which startled her boss), Haley headed off to the kitchen. Inside she found Eric's mother humming as she made her son lunch.

A standard sandwich with extra layers of sizzling bacon, with a bowl filled with Cheesy Poofs, and a large cup with pop. The exact type of meal that Eric struggled to get rid of, and Liane was undoing all of that work.

"Ms. Cartman," Haley greeted once more, nose twitching at the heavy scent of artificial cheese in the air. She waited until that barely wrinkled face met her own, "he won't eat that."

"Oh, is that so?"

"Yes, he prefers something lighter to settle easily in his stomach. He runs a busy life."

Liane clipped the Cheesy Poofs bag shut with a clamp, then she stepped away from the counter. "Listen here, 'hun. Eric is my child, so I won't be pushed around by a common tramp."

"Excuse me?!"

"And that bad haircut isn't helping. I'm the only woman in Eric's life, so butt out." she hissed, before donning a friendly

smile.

"Lunch is ready, pumpkin!" Liane sung, bringing out the meal to her only child.

Eric glanced to see his mother's excited face, arms filled with...lunch. Haley was right behind her, looking not happy in the least.

"Mom, set that down." he grumbled, taking the plate away and setting it on the coffee table. Liane peered at Haley from the corner of her eye, before she sat next to her son. Suddenly there was no more room on the couch, just like when he was younger. Or did the couch just get smaller?

"I need your help."

"I thought you said that you didn't need money?" Liane pouted. "Well let me grab my purse."

Sighing, Eric gripped his mother's arm, preventing her from getting up.

"I don't need money, Mom. Just..." Liane still remained ready to rush over to her purse. "Will you just listen to me, for one second?!"

His harsh voice had the two women in the room flinching, eyes widening in apprehension towards Eric. Palming his eyes with the heel to his hands, Eric groaned. Was everyone going to be an idiot? Was this his personal hell?

"Look..." he started again, quieter this time. "I just need a list of the men or women you've...\_serviced\_, not all of them." he added, particularly when his mother's mouth opened in protest. "Just the ones working with the mining company, I plan on taking it over."

Mulling the words over, his mother hesitated before staring dead on at him. "Alright, but I don't want this blowing up."

"Thanks, Mom. Haley give her my number."

Reaching into her pocket for a business card, the blonde glowered as she handed it over. Her mouth felt like she had bitten into a lemon to the rind, utterly disgusting.

Leaning downwards, Eric briefly kissed his mother on the forehead. With the sultry scent of perfume covering his senses, he left his mother without a goodbye. And certainly didn't reply to the calls his mother yelled out after him.

"Sir, where are you going?" Haley inquired, bumbling after his shadow.

"To a bar."

Haley snorted, "But you just had a drink!"

"Yeah, but it wasn't enough to get me drunk. Take the night off,

Haley."

With the sun darkening, Eric walked alone into the orange evening. Even with the still freshness of the day, the stars began to peek downwards on South Park. But it held no beauty for the brunette, it only cemented the cold reality of everything.

Of the knowledge of his mother's work, and the struggles with his own.

And more importantly, his hatred of this town.

## 9. Blue Cat Galore

"Gambling can turn into a dangerous two-way street when you least expect it. Weird things happen suddenly, and your life can go all to pieces." - Hunter S. Thompson

\* \* \*

><p>Kyle scratched at his red curls, a frown prominent on his features. For the third time in the last twenty minutes, he glanced downwards at his phone. More precisely, the text he had just received from Stan.<p>

\*\*Sorry man, I have to bail. Wendy isn't feeling well. Can we do this another time?\*\*

Being the lovesick fool that he was, he had responded with\*\*, Sure, send her my love.\*\*

Great, now he had to stick around this bar. Getting drunk alone.

In order to drown his sorrows, Kyle took a rather large gulp from his martini. The crisp and dry taste highlighted by the lemon twist that garnished his glass, the only bit of colour in his life right now.

A shadow suddenly blocked his view to his glass, making the blue lights turn into a deep and swirling shade of navy.

Offhandedly, Kyle peered over his shoulder.

"You have got to be kidding me," he groaned, "what are you doing here?!"

Sitting at the stool next to the redhead, Eric sniffed, "Oh, I love you too."

Waving a large hand towards the bartender, he mumbled "Whiskey on the rocks" before turning back to his childhood rival.

"What the fuck are you wearing? I know you're gay, Kyle. But that's no reason to act the part." He said as he gestured to the brown and snug turtleneck his companion wore, seriously what the actual fuck?

Blushing with anger, Kyle took another sip from his drink. The corners of his mind were already becoming foggy with a buzz, swinging lightly to the jazz music that played in the background. A bar that

Kyle didn't expect Stan to suggest, no doubt thinking of sport themed pubs at the time. This one was actually sophisticated...Not that Stan wasn't! He just..

"Shit." Kyle mumbled, giving his head a good shake.

"Are you okay? Sure you're not trapped in the 70's or something?"

Startled by the actual concern in Eric's voice, Kyle steadily focused on him. Trying his hardest to see if he actually meant it, or this was another ploy.

Unable to get a read on him, and the beginnings of a churning in his gut, Kyle looked away. Without realizing it, he had downed his drink.

"Another!" he called out to the bartender, adjusting himself on his stool.

What the hell is this made out of? Kyle moodily thought to himself, the cushion was hard as rocks.

"Stan isn't coming."

Eric sipped from his glass, making it look impossibly small with his large hands. Like a giant trying to fit in.

"I could have told you that." Eric chuckled, but without any of the happiness it was meant to have.

"How?"

Eric squinted at him, "You would have thought that a hippie could handle itself better."

Kyle glared, "Fuck off, can you not be an asshole for one second? How did you know Stan wasn't coming, you...you could have spared me all of this."

"I was being serious. Calm down, Jewboy. I knew Stan wouldn't show up, not because I wanted to stop your little date. Trust me, I didn't know and didn't care. But at the reunion..." Eric paused before he leaned towards Kyle, and despite himself, Kyle moved in closer to hear better.

A shiver slid down his spine as Eric's hot breath brushed against the side of his face and neck; the scent of vanilla, smoke, and musk was present again.

"Wendy was feeling thirsty at the reunion, so she had a lot of cups of punch."

Proud of himself, Eric returned to his original position with a smirk. Already finishing half of his drink without a care, or any effect.

Kyle chewed his bottom lip at the gap between them now, and half wished that Eric would move in closer. Even to whisper some useless shit.

"Oh."

"Speaking of dates, that guy in the leather jacket is leering at you."

"What guy?" Kyle stiffened as he followed Eric's gaze, and there he was. Appearing as if he was in his mid thirties, the man was wearing a thin leather jacket despite the onslaught of cold they've been having.

Any homophobic slur that he expected was non-existent, and in its place was a flirty wink that was directed at him.

"You want to make a bet?"

Finally Kyle looked away, comparing the differences between the stranger and Eric. While the man was cute in a make-out session in the backseat of his car sort of way, Eric had matured in a way that was similar to the whiskey he drank.

While his face was still youthful without any signs of wrinkles, that cold and calculating edge he had wasn't worn down. In fact, he seemed to be measuring the man that sat across from him.

"What kind of bet?"

Finally seeing Eric's glare, the man jumped before hurriedly turning back to his beer.

"To see if you can get his number."

"Why?" Kyle scoffed, unsure if he heard that correctly.

"Just to see if you can get some in that awful outfit."

"It's not that bad! And why would I? What do I win?"

Pondering the potential price, Eric drank the rest of his beverage in one mouthful before he finally said, "A blowjob."

Kyle sputtered, his face burning like the sun that was setting.

Unconcerned, the brunette continued on through, "Now, if I win...You have to go on a date with me, of my choosing. Meaning none of your bitching, and you have to tell Stan about it."

He couldn't believe he was actually considering this, "And all I have to do is get that guy's phone number?"

"Yep."

"Fine, you better do some mouth exercises until I get back."

With his latest martini burning the blood that coursed through his veins, Kyle slowly made his way over to the man in leather. Constantly aware of the set of eyes that seemed to follow all of his movements, he tried to appear dignified and confident as he slid in beside him.

"Hey." he greeted, smiling brightly at the man to his side. "I noticed you staring at me, and well, can I have your number?"

Looking behind him, surely at Eric, the man offered him that same smile. "Just a number, and not anything else?"

A cool hand was placed on his knee, sliding along to his thigh. Kyle was caught between the desire to either throw up, or to punch his upturned nose. Either way, he bottled it up inside and calmly grinned at the attention.

"Yeah, but who knows." he laughed, eyelashes lowering as he gave the man a coy glance.

That hand inched closer, like thorny vines ready to strangle. But the man's free hand plucked a napkin from the bar counter, "I like you, baby."

And as he grabbed a pen from one of his many pockets, the man hunched over the napkin to begin writing a series of numbers.

With a triumphant grin on his face, Kyle shot Eric a smirk. But for whatever reason he didn't seem fazed, and licked at his lips with a wink.

"What the hell are you doin', Benny?"

Kyle turned away, shock pushing the air from his lungs. A woman in a tight cocktail dress snarled at the man dressed in leather, painted lips a glossy line of disapproval. "Pooh, this ain't what it looks like!" he pleaded, pushing the napkin into Kyle's unsuspecting hands.

"Really, cause it don't look like nuthin'. Whose this douche bag, huh?" she snapped, pointing a sharp hot pink nail in Kyle's direction.

"Nobody, pooh! A...a fag, he was comin' onto me!"

Kyle gave a snort topped with loathing, "A fag, really? You know people like you are why homosexuals stay in the closet, because you're too busy being ashamed of your sexuality. So you take it out on others." Standing up, he gave the middle finger to the man before he headed back to his stool. Not caring in the least of the argument he left behind, in particular the woman pouring her drink on her boyfriend, Benny.

He slammed the napkin on the counter, before he grumbled "Another martini, give it an extra kick" to the blinking staff member behind the shiny surface.

"I guess you won." he sighed, rubbing at his still warm face.

"Nah, it was a tie." Eric said with a tuneless hum, giving his glass a little toss. Kyle stared at the clinking ice cubes for a moment, before he broke out of his spell.

"What?" he croaked, feeling too tired and confused to keep up.

\_Where's some Advil when you need it?\_

Eric peeled the napkin from the counter before he showed it to him, "Your friend didn't finish his phone number, he got half way. So we both technically win."

"So...?"

"So, you go on a date with me but you don't tell Stan about it. Unless you truly want to. Now c'mon."

Kyle blinked as the bartender set his martini in front of him, "Wait, where?"

Climbing off his stool, Eric rose a brow at him, "The bathrooms, where else would we be going? Unless you want to do this in city hall?"

He didn't even wait for him, starting to head towards the exit.

Cursing under his breath, Kyle dug out some cash and put it on the counter before racing off after him.

\* \* \*

><p>Kyle refused to go to the bathrooms, fearful that some drunkard would walk in on them. So the pair found themselves outside of Le Bleu Chat, tucked away in the gritty corner of the alleyway.</p>

"Are you sure no one will see us?" Kyle whispered, wary when Eric knelt before him. The grey trousers he wore immediately darkened with the grim coating the floor, and Kyle almost felt bad about it.

Almost, if it weren't for the excitement and suspense wounding him tight. Frowning at the lack of response, Kyle took a step backwards, head thunking as it made contact with the brick wall of the building. "You don't have to do this." Kyle mumbled, unable to stare into those dark eyes.

"I know," Eric said at last, "I never do something I don't want to do. Not if I can help it."

\_ZZzziipp\_

Cautious of what to do with his hands, Kyle rubbed them together as the wind began to pick up. This wasn't his first time doing this, but for whatever reason Eric had him blushing like a virgin. And he hadn't even pulled him out yet, fine with focusing on every shift of his face. A saucy smirk tainted his features when he finally did, warm hand causing Kyle to yelp in shock.

"Shut up! Someone might hear us!" he hissed at Eric's laughter, dancing lowly with the shadows that mingled around them. He was grateful when his snickers became muted, but only because he favoured opening his mouth.

Kyle groaned, eyelids lowering at the feeling of the hot and moist cavern that was Eric's mouth. Unclenching his hands, he dropped one

to Eric's brown locks. As he hoped they'd be, they were silky to the touch, and were a lot easier to run fingers through.

Biting his bottom lip, Kyle took great delight in ruffling it up. But still the strands messily fell around Eric's unblinking eyes, unimaginably sexy.

Randomly Eric alternated between gentle and strong sucks, tongue stroking the underside. Each brush had the redhead standing above him breathing heavily through parted lips, barely thinking about the sounds he made and whether anyone would hear them. Gripping the tan skin that was revealed when Kyle's jeans began to slip downwards, Eric held him back from thrusting into his mouth as he popped off.

A touch breathless, his eyes narrowed with amusement as he considered their surroundings, and the usually pretentious Kyle Broflovski.

"So," he started, casually pumping with his right hand, "what are you hungry for?"

Clearing his throat to appear like Eric wasn't affecting him as much as he was, Kyle knitted his brows together in concentration.

"Hungry for what?" he whined, watching as Eric's pink tongue lapped at a throbbing vein.

"The dinner, \_remember?\_"

"Ahh...Aren't you p-picking?"

Moving in closer to kiss along the flushed skin, Eric groaned in exasperation. "Of course I am, but I'm trying to be polite. And don't worry, Jew, I'm paying."

Lightly swinging his hips, Kyle aimed for the larger man's mouth, nudging it. And ever the gentleman, Eric opened up.

"Anything you want." Kyle whimpered, digging his nails into that lovely chestnut locks. "J-just don't stop..."

Smiling around him, Eric held his gaze as his mouth widened. And with snowflakes just starting to fall from the heavens, a change that arrived earlier than it was broadcasted, Eric bobbed faster.

Kyle closed his eyes, still able to hear the piano playing in the background. Aware that those dark chocolate irides were categorizing everything he did, he let go. With a few weak thrusts, Kyle sighed as pleasure had him lifting himself onto the tips of toes.

Silently Eric followed the movements, suckling until the other rode an orgasm that had him gasping for air with trembling fingers.

Swallowing every last pearly drop, Eric gave the once weeping slit a kiss before he got up. Frowning when the effort became troublesome, especially since his trousers were tighter than usual and covered in dirt and who knows what else.

Reluctantly Kyle settled back down, legs giving an occasional twitch

as his hands dropped from Eric's hair. They fell to his shoulders, where they gave the broad set a squeeze.

"T-thanks."

"No, thank you." Eric whispered back, making a point to lick his lips again. Kyle cleared his throat, lump caught in the back. Suddenly he was reminded of the cold, and pulled himself in.

\_Zziiipp\_

"Let's head out." the taller of the two sung, jacket dusted with snowflakes. As they escaped the darkness of the alleyway, they were greeted by the light of the town. Much like the streetlamps that adorned the streets, the stars overhead brightened their world.

"I hope you don't mind Italian."

"Nope." Kyle replied with a smile and a blush, especially when Eric said, "Perfect."

Either was willing to blame it on the lack of glow that the lamps gave off, but at that moment their hands brushed one another. And secretly neither minded it.

## 10. A Snack Of Tongues

\_Pursuit and seduction are the essence of sexuality. It's part of the sizzle." - Camille Paglia\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Hello?" Haley yawned, rubbing at the creases of her eyes. The deep voice on the other side had her perking up in surprise, and a rumble of relief in her tone.<p>

"Haley, can you track my location?"

"Yes, sir. Why are you in trouble, should I call Greg?" Already she was reaching for her other phone, thumbing through the numbers.

"No, I need it so you can tell me of any restaurants in my area."

For an instance she was calmed by his apparent safety, but new questions began to surface. With a mask of neutrality, she continued on, "Any preferences?"

"Italian."

"Alright, are you eating alone?" She tried to keep the contempt out of her voice, but the sigh he responded with showed that she failed the attempt.

"Haley, we talked about this."

"No, it's fine. I'm just trying to do my job." She gave a silly laugh. "Like I'm supposed to do."

\* \* \*

><p>Eric grunted, face becoming distraught. The switch in his good mood worried Kyle, and so he placed a hand on the brunette's arm.</p>

Sparing him a glance, Eric smiled in a way he hoped would ease any concerns he had. It didn't work so well, Kyle frowned even harder.

"Haley, I promise we'll talk when I get back. But can you set up a reservation, please?"

He was met with silence for a whole minute until she finally responded, "You should be getting the directions any moment, the driver will be sent soon to your location. If that is everything, goodnight Mr. Cartman."

She didn't wait for him to reply, immediately hanging up.

"Trouble in paradise?" Kyle laughed, awkward and high pitched. "A-am I the other man? Haha..."

"My assistant, Haley, is causing quite the stir." Eric grumbled, shoving his phone into his pocket.

"The blonde from the hotel?"

"The very same." Eric sighed, fishing for the silver flask in his jacket. With a flick of his wrist, the cap was undone and soon he was gulping down half the bottle.

"Woah, what are you doing?!" Kyle gasped, latching onto the arm containing the flask. "I know you're big, but hold on!"

Breathless as he removed the metal container from his lips, a tad warm from his immense body heat, Eric messily screwed the lid back on before putting it in his jacket pocket.

"What?" he croaked, the negative feelings he once felt were muted. If only for the rest of the evening, as soon as they finished their date, he'd be sure to drink the rest of the alcohol.

Kyle was glaring at him now, expression filled with such concern that inwardly Eric flinched.

"Are you seriously asking me that, Eric? You just downed a bunch of alcohol after some mysterious phone conversation. How am I supposed to react to that?"

He paused, considering the best response to ease Kyle's ruffled feathers.

"By swooning at the fact that I may be some James Bond."

"What the actual fuck are you talking about?"

Eric broke out in a smile, shoving his hands into his pant's pockets as he lightly paced around the street sidewalk. The light that was being reflected off of the moon turned his hair into an almost ashen

shade.

"Think about it, James Bond drinks a lot. He is well dressed, even though he always wrecks some fancy suit or dress shirt with blood. And let me tell you, blood is not easy to get out of clothes! Not to mention he's incredibly good looking and mysterious, just like myself. And finally, he radiates sex appeal."

The red haired man that was a couple of feet away from him rolled his eyes, and crossed his arms as he sniffed rather loudly.

"You may be all of those things, but besides that last one."

"The sex appeal?"

Kyle nodded with a wary smirk, careful when Eric moved in closer to him. He kept his stance guarded and aloof when the man in question stepped into his personal space, forcing him to toss his head back to actually look into his eyes.

He shivered as the fingers that suddenly pressed themselves against his hip bones, moved him back a step or two. From this position the wind was blocked from spearing his skin, and paired together with the heat that oozed off of Eric, Kyle reluctantly followed that warmth.

"Are you sure?" Eric mumbled, leaning down so his lips barely brushed against his date's. Those fingers on Kyle's hip turned into a hand, and immediately it curled and drew his body flushed to its owner.

"Absolutely..." Came the forced response, even if he hummed with excitement and lust. Quickly he found himself in a teasing kiss, with the crease of Eric's irritating smirk biting his bottom lip and sucking it into his mouth.

Giving a large shiver, Kyle burrowed his hands into the fabric of the brunette's shirt, wrinkling it as he hung for dear life. As if they didn't notice the weather, warm fingers found themselves under the beginning of his shirt, smoothing the skin of his stomach.

But as soon as it started, Eric peeled himself away from the trembling man. Kyle frowned, thoroughly pissed off and aching for the missing touch, when a sleek vehicle turned onto the silent street.

It rolled to a stop in front of them, and before Kyle could process what was going on, Eric was holding the door open for him. He stood there like an idiot for a second, confused and still strangely angry and lustful when he climbed into the comfort of heated leather. He dumbly sat on a seat, clicking a seat belt over him when Eric's hand was on his thigh, slowly inching its way closer to his groin.

He bit back a moan, fearfully glancing to the driver. He seemed not to notice, gaze focused on the stretch of road as he steadily drove, but his presence still had Kyle's nerves screeching.

"Stop" he hissed, swatting at that coy hand.

But it moved closer, for a brief second an inch away from the place

that Kyle half craved it to be, when it was taken back. He glared at Eric from the corner of his eye, but the other man wouldn't look at him, fixated by the landscape and buildings that were dashed away in the moonlight.

Left to his own devices, Kyle stewed in his thoughts and his reason. But most importantly, he pondered over what he hoped to get out of this relationship the rest of the car ride, with only damned silence to tease him further.

## 11. Dinner With A Kiss

"I'd rather regret the things I've done than regret the things I haven't done." - Lucille Ball

\* \* \*

><p>Wordlessly the driver pulled over to a small restaurant, something that was squashed by two much larger buildings. It was fair to say that it was passed down to the hands of younger generations of the original owner's family, as the bricks were old and spotted, with equally ancient light fixtures that cast a copper glow.</p>

Kyle was unsure for a moment, especially since it was as quiet as the rest of the street. But Eric clicked his seat belt undone for him, and yanked him out of the car and down to that artificial lighting. Similar to everything else, inside was as silent as a sealed tomb. If things didn't work out here, at least it was somewhere to warm up.

It was an elderly woman that swept by the door that addressed them, huffing as she straightened herself and away from the broom in her grasp.

"Only two?" she sighed, wiping at a few white strands that escaped her bun. The apron that was tightly wrapped around her figure was stained from constant use, with brilliant blotches of red, green, and yellow.

Eric nodded, "Thank you, Rosa."

As she lumbered off, probably to fetch their menus, Eric led them to a table that sat near the windows. There they could see the blue wash of the streets, foggy with the snowflakes that drifted down to the cold ground.

Brushing his knees against a large set, Kyle winced as he shifted his legs to the side. He cleared his throat, trying to find his voice once more.

"D-do you come here often?"

"Often enough." Eric ran his fingers through his hair, pushing it away from his eyes. Already the clumps of snow were melting, and a few droplets trailed down his face.

Kyle unabashedly watched them intently, flushing when his eyes were captured by Eric's.

Rosa hobbled over to their table, dropping the menus unceremoniously onto the wooden surface without a care. She flashed Eric a smile when he said "Risotto with lemon garnish and green beans" without once looking at the menu.

When her wrinkled face turned to Kyle, he was certainly a lot slower to spew out his choice.

"Fettuccine Alfredo, please."

She gave a curt nod, shadow of a smile on her face when she asked what they wanted to drink.

Kyle caught Eric eyeing their wine selection, and as he opened his mouth, Kyle intervened by saying, "Just water with some ice cubes, thank you."

Eric glared at him as Rosa was off again, darting towards the kitchen.

"I wanted something else, Jew." he grumbled, squinting when Kyle shook his head in frustration.

"I could tell, but you already reek enough of alcohol. This is going to be a shitty date if I'm stuck with you being drunk."

Childishly Eric pouted and kicked Kyle from under the table, grinning only when he received a yelp in pain for his efforts.

"Unlike you, I can handle a couple of drinks. And please, you love the way I smell."

"What the fuck are you taking about? I like nothing about you, and certainly not love."

If he was fazed by this admission, Eric didn't show it. In fact his grin deepened, and as he leaned forward, he gave a rich whisper.

"Really? Because on our first night together, you did nothing but moan my name."

Kyle chewed on his bottom lip, questioning on how to retort that claim. Especially since it was true.

Thankfully Rosa came back in time, and the clatter of plates cleared up the silence that was beginning to boil over.

As the pleasant smell of reheated pasta wafted into the air, the sweating glasses of water stuck to the wood underneath as they were put down. Kyle ripped his own upwards, and greedily took a gulp. Somewhat because of he was actually thirsty, and for how Eric so easily made his throat and mouth dry.

Putting it back down, Kyle was startled by the sound of Eric's voice reaching out to his ears.

"What?"

Eric gave an exasperated sigh, spearing another piece of green bean

before popping it into his mouth. After he swallowed the bit, he repeated what he said once more.

"I said: What tight-ass work are you up to?"

Kyle snorted, "I'm a lawyer."

"I know that! I meant what work is your firm currently up to?"

Swirling his fork around his pasta, Kyle furrowed his brow, "How did you know I was a lawyer? And why do you care? I'm not going to do any illegal shit for you."

"Oh, please. Give me some credit, Kyle, I already have people for that. I asked to start up a conversation, or do you want to spend the rest of the evening staring into my eyes?"

It was Kyle's turn to give Eric a kick, but the grunt he received reminded him far too much of the night they spent together, and the possible future ones. Skin flushed a light pink, he forced another forkful of intertwined pasta into his mouth.

"We're just trying to build up our reputation, and help the community."

Eric rolled his eyes, "Yeah, right. Lawyers helping people? Please!"

"Like you would know anything on the concept of charity or anything that involved being a caring and considerate person."

"You got me there." Eric smiled, "I'm just a cold hearted and greedy bastard."

The redhead across from him nosily gulped down the bits of food that were lodged in his throat, chest constricting with the words that came so easily from Eric.

"You know that's not what I meant." he whispered, voice shaky and uneven.

Eric looked away, "I know, but I do."

Kyle was unsure of what to do for a moment, but soon his hand was clutching Eric's. Neither said anything as a spare finger rubbed at the back of the other's large hand. It was possible that either were shocked that Eric didn't move away from the contact, and instead accepted it with a stony expression.

Not able to meet the brown eyes he so desperately wanted, Kyle settled with looking out of the window. The curling leaves on the brittle trees sank off of their perches when snatched up by the persistent current of wind. He watched one dance about, before it was swept towards a sewer drain and became soggy as it was plastered against the sodden street.

"Why are you here?'

He didn't look away from the window, not even for the question.

"I don't know."

"Is it because I now have money?"

He turned back to his supposed date, "No" he said, and he meant it.

The expression that donned Eric's face twisted to that of simple of understanding, and the realization of the truth that was presented to him.

"I believe you." But Kyle wasn't sure what he was going to do with that knowledge.

\* \* \*

><p>After they had finished their meal and Eric dutifully paid for dinner, the pair stumbled once more outside. This time Kyle found himself pressed against the side of a building, invisible to the few strays that drifted down the street, and a hand crawling its way onto the spread of his chest.</p>

He shivered at the feel of the cold stones, his thin shirt doing nothing to protect his body and its heat.

Eric pulled away for a moment, and Kyle whined at the loss. But soon a crisp and large jacket was pressed into him, and while he withheld any comment he so desired to say, Kyle put it on and welcomed the comfort that still lingered.

Heavily he breathed in the scent of Eric and his cologne, moaning aloud when a set of teeth scraped the tender expansion of his neck. As he gave a few thrusts towards the figure that loomed over him, Kyle groaned at the feel of the erection that brushed his own.

"You're hard already?" he weakly laughed, yanking Eric's face away from his neck and to his mouth. It was lavish with an undertone of need, greater than just a quick kiss.

"I've been hard since I gave you that blowjob, it was damn painful to sit with at dinner."

With a breathless chuckle, Kyle blindly lowered his hand downwards until he grazed the surface. He knew when he hit the right spot when Eric gave a low grunt, and rocked himself closer towards his hand. Kyle couldn't help but smile, forehead against Eric's as he continued to stroke and squeeze the other's erection through his pants.

He could smell the scent of lemon on Eric's lips, and moaned when the brunette's hot breath blew onto his cheek.

A vibration cut through his body, instinctively he dropped his hand and reached for his back pocket.

Incoming call from: Stan Marsh

"Fuck!" Kyle swore, pressing answer without even realizing it. He couldn't look into those brown eyes as he said, "Hello?"

"Hey, Kyle. It's Stan."

"Oh, hi."

Seemingly enticed further, Eric moved his mouth back to Kyle's neck, incessantly pressing open mouthed kisses there.

Not wanting to raise any alarms with Stan, Kyle held back his moans as he screwed his eyes closed and tried to follow their conversation.

"I feel bad about ditching you, but I had to stay with Wendy."

Fuck Wendy, Kyle thought with a grimace.

Sensing his mood, Eric thrust his hips into Kyle's. The red haired lawyer's body shook with the restraint from not groaning, the delicious friction sending bolts of pleasure straight to his core.

"I-It's fine."

"Well, that's the thing. I know you're busy, but would you like to go to the marine with me? Possibly look at some whales?"

"S-sure, I'd love to go with you, Stan."

Eric paused, body rigid with unexplained tension.

"Great, it's a date then!"

Kyle sighed, unable to erase the smile that found its way onto his face.

"Sure, it's a date."

As they exchanged goodbyes, Eric stepped away from Kyle breathing hard. The other cleared his throat, suddenly aware of the disheveled and flushed appearance of Eric.

"Dude, are you alright?"

Eric glanced to the side, and after a second he shook his head, as if to clear it from some haze.

"I'm fine. I just..." he scrubbed at his face, "it's been a long day. You've done your bit for the bet, I won't hold you back any longer."

Kyle rose his phone higher up in the frigid air, gesturing towards it. "This isn't because of Stan is it? He only wants to go to some marine."

"No, it was never about that hippie. And you don't have to explain anything to me, we aren't dating."

"I-"

"I'll call the driver and give him your address." Eric spun on his

heel, starting to walk towards the lip of the entrance.

"Wait!" Kyle called out, so very confused, but sincere in wanting Eric to come back. "Where are you going?!"

Eric looked over his shoulder, face unreadable as they met each other's gaze.

Kyle was the first to divert his attention elsewhere, a drop in his stomach shaking him.

Coursing through the bitter tang of the night, the soft whisper crept along slippery surfaces and into Kyle's ears.

The words "I don't know" had him freezing, and filled with such guilt at the lonely sound of it.

But before he could sum up the courage to say anything, he was gone.

"Stay" weakly rang out, heard only by the one person who didn't need it, Kyle.

## 12. Is It Whale Worth It?

"To truly laugh, you must be able to take your pain, and play with it!" - Charlie Chaplin

\* \* \*

><p>"You don't have to go!" Sheila cried out, clinging to her son's arm. She got only an affectionate eye roll and smile in response.<p>

Kyle's time visiting South Park was over, meaning he had to return to his dull life once more. But currently his mother prevented him from walking out of his childhood home with his suitcase, that is, until his father wished him a farewell and pried him out of his mother's grasp.

"Come on, dear. We don't want to make Kyle late in beating this morning's traffic."

He gave his father a thankful nod, and after promising to call more, he began the long trek home. And his father couldn't have been more right, the traffic had been awful! Thankfully he missed the full impact of it, but just barely. Soon after Kyle dropped off his things and had a blistering hot shower, it was off to that marine. It surprised both Stan and Kyle to realize that they lived closer than they thought, a mere city or two away. Which was a blessing, meaning that Kyle could arrive there relatively soon.

While he waited in his car for the destined time to arrive, Kyle stared at the number in his phone's contact list.

It was the set of digits he had discovered on his back, Eric Cartman's.

After their dispute, if you were willing to call it that, Kyle had

thought of no one else. Not even on the ride over to the marine did Kyle once think of Stan, but rather about that episode in the alley way. What Eric meant, and what his true intentions were. He's known Eric long enough to understand that things weren't always simple with him, and there was always something underneath what he said.

Loosening the hold of the flannel scarf around his neck, Kyle took a deep and steady breath as he typed in a message, and hit send.

\*\*Eric, it's me. Kyle. Look, I don't want things to get weird between us. I can't think of a recent time where I had more fun, even when we fought. Can we still see each other? At least for coffee so we can talk about this...and us.\*\*

There, something that came from the heart. Kyle chewed anxiously on his thumb's nail, staring at the blankness of his screen until a reply popped up.

\*\*I'm sorry, Mr. Cartman isn't in at the moment. I'm Haley, his personal assistant. But I can speak on his behalf.\*\*

Haley? Oh. She had been that woman that wanted to scratch his eyes out at the hotel.

\*\*Do you always go over his cell's messages? Look, I don't want to sound rude. But it'd be a lot better if I could actually talk to him, instead of his staff.\*\*

Kyle glared at his screen as he waited for the assistant's response, brooding over the fact he had to go through all of this ridiculousness. Eventually she replied, but only after a minute of tense waiting.

\*\*We have that much in common, but you may not realize how truly busy Mr. Cartman is. So instead of getting in the way of everyone and wasting their time, let's terminate this useless contract and move on with our lives. If you feel hurt in any way, I'm sure we can come to an understanding if you are compensated for your effort. Thank you for your concern, but please don't message this number again.\*\*

He frowned, unable to believe his eyes. Fine, if that's how Cartman wanted to be. So much of a fucking tool that he couldn't say it to his face, only by his assistant. And to think he felt bad for him!

\*\*Excuse me?! I won't lower myself to your standards and let myself be bought out, you can tell MR. CARTMAN that I understand loud and clear. He won't hear of me again, oh, and Haley? You can go fuck yourself! Have a nice day.\*\*

He didn't even bat an eye before he blocked Eric's number and stuffed his cell into his glove compartment, closing it with far more force than necessary. His eyes became prickled, and with a jolt, he realized he was crying. Sniffing loudly, Kyle angrily wiped at the corners of his eyes.

It didn't matter, Kyle was better than this. He was better than Eric Theodore Cartman, and didn't need any of his satisfying kisses,

borderline nice jokes, or his bullshit.

Kyle was fine, he was better off alone.

\* \* \*

><p>Haley chuckled to herself, deleting her conversation with the annoying day-walker. She tucked a lock of hair behind an ear, mightily pleased with herself and how she handled such a sticky situation.</p>

Goodbye, Mr. Broflovski. And good riddance.

"Haley?"

She spun around, heart pounding and eyes wide with fear. Her employer stood in the door frame, yawning from his recent awaking from sleep. They had arrived back to his home late last night, as he was quite determined to put some distance between him and South Park. Haley blamed it on Kyle, but when she asked about it, Eric would get into a cranky fit that had her ducking for cover.

"Yes, sir?" she hummed, appreciating the sight of her boss still in his boxers. Aware of when her eyes wandered, Eric shifted his weight onto the balls of his feet, uncomfortable.

"Have you seen my phone?"

She smiled brightly at him, shaking the glossy bit of technology in her hand, "Right here, sir."

Eric frowned, taking the couple of steps into the room to pluck it from his assistant's hands, "Why do you have it?"

Haley's smile froze in place, "I was charging it, as you always request."

Everything became still as her boss gave her a glance over, trying to sense if there was any sneaky motive a foot. His shoulders relaxed, and it was clear he accepted Haley's excuse. But it isn't clear if it was because Haley was a good actress, or because he placed blind trust in her.

As he thumbed through his contacts, he walked out of his bedroom and towards the kitchen. As he approached the counter which housed his cup of freshly brewed coffee, he sighed.

"Is everything alright, sir?" Haley asked, having followed him down the twisting hallways. From here in the opened space of the room, Haley could see the scratch marks on his shoulders and back, highlighted by the light streaming from the windows that overlooked their city. Eric had been hurt before, when he was starting out. He had to create ties with less than savory members of society to clear cut the competition, and the result left him with scars. Mostly from being slashed at, but there was the few burn marks here and there.

But these, they were from passion and nothing else. Kyle had given them to him, and the thought had Haley grinding her teeth.

Eric was the exact opposite, he didn't seem to mind.

"I don't know, I was expecting..." He groaned, deep and spiced with regret and longing. "I have no clue what I was thinking or what I wanted, but I fucked up."

Haley watched with rapt attention as he sat at the counter in the middle of the room, bringing his mug labelled 'the boss' closer to his person.

"It can't have been that bad?" she offered, breathless as the other's Adam apple bobbed with a sip of the dark liquid.

"Maybe I should just message him..." Eric mumbled, now talking more to himself than her.

The nicely dressed blonde was stiff with that sentence, but she praised whatever deity that listened to her, when Eric followed with, "But I don't wanna look weak...I'll wait for him to start us off. I don't want to mess this up."

Haley's heart swelled with love and pain at that, she knew that Eric needed something better than a redhead to fuck. He had been hurt so much that he needed someone to be by his side, to be gentle. And she could offer that, she would swear on every holy artifact ever created if she could get him to return those sentiments.

And as he was bent over the counter, looking stressed out and haggard. She knew it was for the best, or that's what she promised herself. He'd learn to move on and forget Kyle ever existed.

\* \* \*

><p>A tap from his window had him cranking his head to the side, meeting Stan's concerned face. Shit. He finished wiping the last of the betraying tears on his cheeks before he turned off his car and opened its door, a smile in place.</p>

But Stan didn't put up with his bullshit, and the first words out of his mouth were, "Are you okay, dude?"

Kyle shook his head, choking those negative feeling back down. Stan understood perfectly well, and remained quiet when they walked past the building where he worked, and approached the boat tied off to the docks.

With a cheerful smile, Stan showed off Wendy and his supposed child. It was an old thing, yellow paint chipping away in patches. It stood out from the others by the additions that were freshly painted on the sides, flowers and lightning bolts. It was clear that the young couple couldn't settle on one idea, so they compromised.

It was so stupid, but it had Kyle laughing hard. Stan was humble enough to join in too, blushing the whole time.

But it was when they set off after preparing properly for caution, bodies vibrating with the purr of the boat's engine, Stan started the expected conversation.

The clouds were still darkened from yesterday's snow fall, and it

cast its glow onto the choppy waters they skated across. It made Kyle a bit sick to look at the greyish blue waves for too long, feeling the cold distinctly with the wind biting his cheeks and the frigid froth of the water spraying onto their boat.

Stan eased it into a slow drift, and finally Kyle could hear him with the roar in his ears.

"You know you can talk to me, right?"

It was hard for Kyle to turn around in his life preserver vest, but he managed.

"Can I?"

"Of course."

Kyle frowned, pulling himself further into his done up jacket. He should have brought something thicker, he wasn't taking this as well as Stan was.

"There's this...person, and they, well...I guess they decided that they wouldn't want to be around me anymore."

Stan nodded, turning off the boat so they drifted with the crashing waves.

"I wouldn't call it love...I don't think we know each other well enough for that, or at least spent time together. But there was definitely something there, an attraction that went deeper." Kyle frowned, wondering how to explain what Eric and he had.

"Lately I've been in a rut, but with that person I felt like I was finally breaking out of it. And exploring things that were new and exhilarating. But when they stopped...us, they did it without talking face to face. Instead someone else sent me the text, and I guess I was used or felt like I was considered worthless."

Stan's cold hand touched his shoulder, squeezing it with all of the comfort he could offer.

"If they made you feel like shit, Kyle. Trust me, you deserve better."

"Thanks." Kyle whispered, but their conversation didn't deal with the bitterness he felt. But at least it steeled his determination to heal and with time, forget Eric Cartman. And he would do just that.

\* \* \*

><p>Alone with his phone, as he sent Haley on another useless quest to cheer him up, Eric stared at the screen. He could have said a number of things to Kyle, write about how much he hated him, and how he loathed that he felt...<em>things<em> around him.

Angrily he took another shot of the whiskey he had poured himself, his shaking hand sloshed the liquid onto the cool tiles below. He couldn't understand what was happening to him, but one thing was for certain. Kyle knew what was going on, he could fix him.

Eric tried to blink back the on coming headache that carved itself into his mind, fingers sliding as he typed.

\*\*Can we talk? Things are backwards and falling apart, I can't fix this.\*\*

His hopes shouldn't have been so high, Kyle never replied. So he drank the entirety of his liquor cabinet to fall asleep that night.

The words,\_ never trust a Jew\_ echoed.

End  
file.